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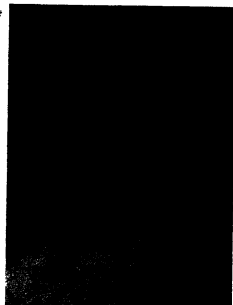
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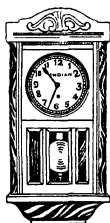
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PLATES

PORTRAITS OF THE POET

PART I

(1) THE LAST DAYS

(2) DECEMBER, 1939

(3) FEBRUARY, 1940 Rabindranath and Gandhi

(4) APRIL, 1940

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Santiniketan

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By Universal Art Gallery, Calcutta

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(16) 1941

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FROM A PHOTO TAKEN AT SANTINIKETAN

By S Shaha, Calcutta

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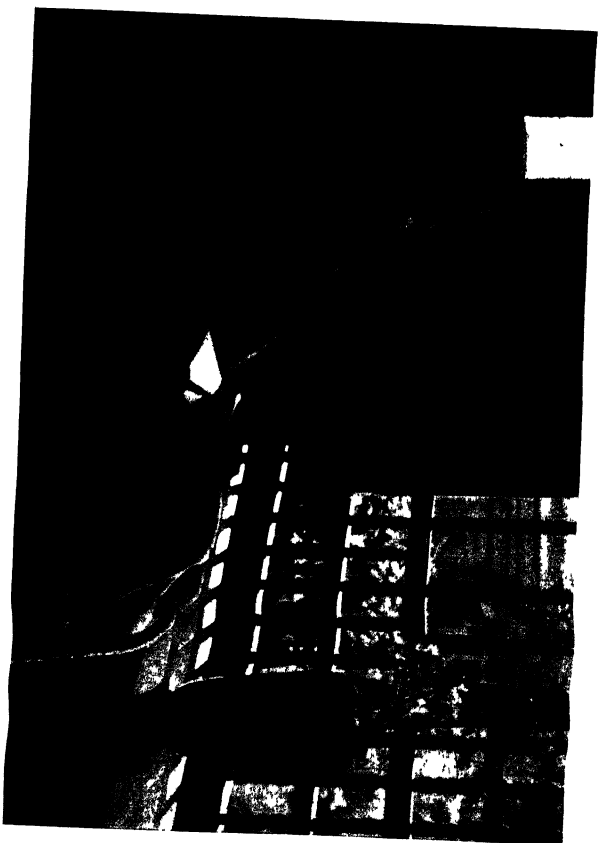
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The Last Days

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Pranam

THE CITY OF CALCUTTA that welcomed more than eighty years ago an unnamed child on a May day gleaming with the golden glory of the sun, bade adieu to a world figure in a cloud-laden August evening.

The land which he celebrated in his songs, the land that thrilled to his evangel of love and desire, of joy and suffering, the land that saw in him a seer out of the storied past built up in the heroic mould of an earlier creation—this land mourns her most resplendent son of modern times.

The world which saw in this poet, this artist, this philosopher, another Prophet from the East with the message of Peace on Earth and Goodwill to Men, the world which found in him and renewed through him faith in the eternal verities,—this world has come forward to share in India's sorrow, to share India's loss.

In this sorrow shared by millions, in this sympathy felt by friends to whom he made us known, may it be given unto us to find consolation!

But men are we, and to-day we are not ashamed of the tears that flow unbidden from our eyes. Many of us are what we are because he lived. We have drunk deep out of the fount of his poesy and songs. We that had loved him, followed him, honoured him, lived in his mild and magnificent eye, learnt his great language, caught his clear accents and made him the pattern of our lives,—we found expressed in him and through him our deepest feelings, our soaring dreams, our highest aspirations.

From our life a light and a sweetness has departed. Our empty hearts, our sorrow of separation will from now on gaze in silence all night from star to star; our pangs of sorrow will be carried in our dreams, in our wakeful hours.

But we may not sorrow for long. Our Master had sung of flowers, of flowing waters, of the light that never was on sea or land but he brought also into the placid tranquillity of India's life a sword that smote at wrong and injustice. This sword flashing as a flame has dispelled from our eyes the film of weakness of resolve, driven from our hearts fear and feebleness.

In our sorrow we may not forget the duty the Master has laid on us—to redeem India and to cleanse the war-worn world with the peace that has been India's quest through ages. Our tear-stained souls seek strength and guidance from his undying spirit—to which as to the abiding memory of his effulgent presence here on earth we render our reverent 'pranam'.

The Last Days of Rabindranath

RECORD OF A VISIT TO SANTINIKETAN

By

BUDDHADEVA BOSE.

A Rainbow of Song

WHEN we visited Santiniketan in last May Rabindranath had just completed the eightieth year of his life in the shadow of a serious illness and amid the rejoicings of the whole of Bengal. We had heard that his suffering was acute and that his powers were failing him, and were, therefore, wondering how we would find him. Perhaps, he would speak no more than a few words, perhaps it would not be possible to sit at his feet with the old easy confidence. But all these misgivings were dispelled when we saw him. On the day of our arrival we saw him at dusk. He was sitting out in the open verandah, and he seemed tired and weak, as if faded out in the shadows of approaching night. When we saw him next morning he was sitting in the covered south verandah. He was wearing a yellow cloth but his upper garment was white, and by his side lay a plate with a little heap of *bel* flowers on it. Yes, his face was emaciated and his flame-like complexion

pale. But when one looked at the wrist or the fist, one could still get a glimpse of the massive splendid body, solid with bone and muscle. Gone were the lovely locks that had always rolled down his neck like a lion's mane, but the head was still as beautiful with its long, white curls parted in the middle. It seemed to me that his eyes had lost their piercing gaze, for it was with a gentle and tender look that his eyes rested on somebody. For this reason, he did not seem any longer to resemble a Mughal emperor, there was rather a subtle affinity with the portraits of Tolstoy in old age. Never before was even Rabindranath so beautiful. Perhaps the burden of age and the torments of a disease were both necessary to achieve this beauty. The only poem which Bernard Shaw ever wrote was a gift to Ellen Terry on her birthday. 'How is it', Shaw wondered, 'that while we all get older with every year, Ellen gets younger?' One had only to look at the portraits of Rabindranath from boyhood onwards to be convinced that the older he grew, the more beautiful he became. Even a few years ago his face shone with a dazzling brilliance, every other face in crowded meetings would instantly pale the moment he entered. That, too, was beautiful, but



—Arriving at the Opening Ceremony of the "Chena-Bhawan" (The Hall of Chinese Learning) at Santiniketan on April 14, 1937

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—Arriving at the opening ceremony of the "Hindi-Bhawan" (The Hall of Hindi Learning) at Santiniketan on January 31, 1939

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—From a photo taken in 1939 at the Baranagar house of Prof. Prasanta Mahalanobis where the Poet usually stayed in recent years on his visits to Calcutta

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the soft twilight-glow that plays on his face today is perhaps the highest point that beauty can reach.

But who would have said that he was ill! The moment we entered he started talking. His voice, we noticed, was fainter than ever before but his talk as splendid. He rested from time to time but never groped for a word, for the right word was always on his lips. He looked straight before him as he

talked, but now and then cast sidewise glances at the listeners which did not, however, interrupt the flow of talk. That day he talked continuously for over an hour; we were bathed in an incredible, marvellous stream in which painting and music, life and literature, humour and tenderness were all blended in rich profusion and admirable proportion. He ill! Who could have thought of that! This luminous intellect, this passionate interest in all the great and little things of life, this kingly mastery over language—our hearts refused to associate all these with decay or infirmity of any kind. Yet, he was ill, very much so. His disease was not only painful, it involved many little annoyances, too. Common men—and even many of those who are not so common—would have grown ill-tempered, harsh and slack, they would have gradually withdrawn from the external world and soon reached a point at which nothing but the disease mattered, for we have heard that even geniuses are unable to think of anything except the toothache when a tooth is really aching. But there was not the slightest stain in Rabindranath's personality, the diamond was still flawless. He talked on all subjects, but never about his illness. So much so, that he always avoided words like 'illness' or 'disease'. All that he said was that he was 'tired' or that his 'body-machine had gone out of order'. As if it wasn't anything serious! In his thoughts, his behaviour, in the conduct of his daily life nothing was loose, nothing shabby, nothing disorderly. Only two or three persons were allowed to nurse him intimately. As the strain on them was heavy there was an attempt to introduce new hands, but he was extremely reluctant to be tended by strangers or even by friends who were new to the task. The truth perhaps was that the very idea of being personally attended to was repellent to him



—With Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who performed the opening ceremony of the "Hindi-Bhawan" at Santiniketan

and had always been so. Now, it was true, he had perforce to depend on others for most things and though he tolerated this situation just because it could not be helped, he wished to restrict the number of his nurses to as few as possible. Perhaps the very fact that he had got to be served in that way hurt his taste and feelings. A middle-aged professor, who had spent the last thirty years of his life at Santiniketan, once remarked that in his long career he had observed Gurudeva's anger only on two occasions. The first time was when there was dirt on the plate in which his food was served. And on another occasion he had happened to notice one of the teachers lying in the verandah of his cottage while two young pupils were massaging his body. 'Gurudeva was furious, we had never seen him like that'. We heard many other stories, each of which showed that, suffering as he was from a long and obstinate disease, his exquisite sensitiveness was as wide awake as ever. There were brilliant flashes of wit even when the physical pain was terrible and there was a general feeling of apprehensive gloom. As a patient he was very quiet, but not very docile, perhaps. He hated lying down in bed and had to be coaxed to retire. They would tell him that he must sleep now, and he would close his eyes while his feet would move to and fro. When the command was more emphatically repeated he would lie still and say, 'Well then, I will now think. You can do all else, but you can't rob me of my thoughts'. Doctors and nurses can do no more than help the body in combating disease, but there is no external remedy for the infection that a disease spreads to the mind, and in that field Rabindranath won every battle entirely on his own strength.

As we came out after seeing and hearing him, every time we felt anew that our whole lives had been blessed. His talk was a rainbow of song, a symphony of colour. It was manna to the sensual ear as well as a charmer of the spirit. His infinite mastery over the Bengali language could not be comprehended unless one heard him talk. What flew from his lips was exactly the language he used in his later prose works, and he beat all his characters in the power of presenting a most commonplace thing in an extraordinary manner. As the words flowed, similes and metaphors blossomed like flowers, and there were sudden flashes of humour at the most unexpected moments. Many are familiar with his perfectly rounded golden voice and his firm yet delicate style of pronunciation; as a matter of fact, Bengali seemed to be a more powerful and much sweeter language when Rabindranath spoke it.

At that time we found Rabindranath occupying a suite on the ground floor of *Udayan*. The rooms faced south. Since his illness in 1940 he had become somewhat sensitive to heat, and so an air-conditioning plant had been installed in his bedroom. Not a large room, it was. Along the wall on one side was a long table with rows of bottles, phials and glasses on it. A bed, an easy chair, a few books in a little book-case and a few leather-covered backless cane seats for visitors—these were all the furniture. On the walls were two of his own pictures, a drawing of a horse by the Chinese painter Ju Peon and a

Japanese cloud-scape. There was another, and a still smaller room, and that was all. The whole of the world, all the hills and plains and seas, cities, rivers and forests, all multitude and all solitude had converged in a couple of rooms with a verandah on either side. Such were the Poet's last days.

'I Sing of the New'

THE last chapter of Rabindranath's life was fit material for an epic poem. We saw in him a king who, after having conquered the world and spent the days of his life in the fullness of opulence, had been deprived of all by one stroke of crooked fate. The kingdom was still his and his spirit was ever a king's, but all means of communication between the king and his kingdom were being closed down. He had all, and yet he had nothing. His genius was tirelessly active and his creative impulse urgent, but those little mechanisms of the body without whose help no art can take tangible shape were refusing to co-operate. The poet who had refused to close the doors of the senses and sit in meditation had to feel those very doors being closed one after another. His sight was very weak, and when he read, which he did with great difficulty and greater persistence, he had to hold up the page very close to his eyes. His hearing was feeble and his fingers were so exhausted that he could no longer hold a brush, and even the pen refused to obey. Friends told us that on one occasion he had remarked, 'There was no end to the gifts I received from the hand of God, and now He is taking them back one by one. I had hoped to spend the last days of my life in painting pictures but that, too, has been taken away.' Crowds of pictures haunted him, but he could not give any of them a local habitation and a name, the phantoms returned to limbo. The mind was glowing but the fingers were numb. From his heart rose tunes which the voice could not capture—the stream of music was wasting itself in the same lethal waters where his unborn paintings were drowned. Of all the arts he had practised his best-beloved was the art of song, and his singing days seemed at last to have been over. One afternoon it rained and after the shower we went to see the Poet in the evening. On entering Rathi Babu's drawing room we noticed many records of Rabindranath's songs lying scattered and were told that the Poet had just been listening to them. We found him in the little back room reclining on his usual easy-chair, looking ill and weak, which he seldom did. 'I was just trying to evoke a song of the rains', he said. 'But I can't do it any longer'.

And what about his life's constant companion—his writing? The man who, since boyhood, had been writing millions of words in verse and prose could not hold the pen in the last months of his life and found it difficult even to put a signature. And yet the stream of words was ceaseless, all poems right up to those published in *Janmadine* were composed in his own hand, but after that he had perforce to abandon calligraphy. Finally he took to dictating and was not easily pleased with the draft. A single manuscript was revised many times over and still he remained doubtful whether he had really



DECEMBER
1939

From a photo
taken at Vidnagore

Courtesy Sajani Kanta Das

Engraved & printed by

By



RABINDRANATH AND GANDHIJI

FEBRUARY
1940

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1938
Aug. 24



1939
April 14

been able to put it across. We found him strangely modest about his own writings. However severe might be the oppression of failing flesh, he could never tolerate any looseness in his work. What a perfect work of art was *Galpa-Salpa*, the delightful book in prose and verse he had just published, ostensibly for children. One noticed a condescending tone in most reviews of his recent works, as if the reviewers wanted to imply that all this was good enough for the old man in failing health. This

patronising attitude was an insult not only to the works themselves but to the Poet's personality. He was as critical about his own works as he was lenient about others', and it was possible that nothing that he had written of late had completely satisfied him. That is the reason why he did not feel it beneath him, as he might well have done, to notice the remarks of critics, but, on the contrary, rather wished to hear what they said. At the same time, he did not want half-hearted, meaningless praise,



1940
Aug. 25



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nor did he care about being mentioned in a tone of awe ; what he wanted to know was whether he had been able to do it. And in this lay his humility. Of course, he might not have bothered, he might just as well have thought that people were bound to accept whatever Rabindranath wrote. But to his last day he did not think of his reputation as an established fact, and that was why each of his new works was suffused with the enthusiasm of the new writer. Because he was born anew with each new book, he could claim new fields of fame each time. In the song he had composed for his last birthday celebrations he had once again evoked the new and said, 'Let it appear again, the first auspicious moment of my birth'. This was not mere effusion, for these words contained the basic truth of his literary life.

It struck us that, immeasurably famous as he was, Rabindranath had acquired an immeasurable humility and wanted to know whether he had really been able to be of any use to his country. The man who had created Bengal had to ask whether Bengal had accepted him. He wanted to feel sure, before he took his leave, that all that he had done had not been in vain. He had accepted with a good grace the numerous felicitations that had poured on him on the occasion of his last birthday, for in all these, he had simply seen the fact that he had been accepted by the whole of his country. 'You have not boomed me, that is what they do in our country'.

The Lord of Life

WHEN we arrived Rabindranath had just finished writing a short story. Many other stories—new both in form and content—might have come from him if there were a process by which one could write as one thought. The second part of *Yoga-yoga* lay completely thought out in his mind, and it was thrilling when he told us the story one morning. This wonderful story never crossed the limits of the world of thought, and a great novel perforce remains unfinished. For it was not possible for him to undertake a long work, and so he was making rhymes and yarns for children and working at poems and literary essays, while a short story was suddenly released or a malediction against this war-torn insane civilisation came down in terrific fury. And this was how he satisfied, as best as he could, the infinite yearnings of tremendous power. How much more cruel than physical suffering was this conflict of flesh and spirit! His was a tormented life during the last months, intolerable in its contradiction between thought and action, imagination and performance. At any rate, it should have been so, though no trace of it appeared on the surface. On the contrary, he was the picture of perfect peace. He had nothing of the catastrophic agony of a deaf Beethoven. You would have found him completely self-contained, but not at all indifferent. His eyes were always open to the immense spectacle of life, and he was ever the first to challenge the insolence of power when it threatened to violate truth and justice. But, as regards himself, he seemed to have accepted all afflictions with a luminous serenity.

He never complained. He never sighed. It was with an elfin touch of humour or with a fairy-like gentleness that he mentioned his own infirmity. If his heart was lacerated by agony, his heart alone was aware of it, and none else.

All the same, Rabindranath's imprisoned life was not a lesser tragedy than Beethoven's deafness. He loved to see. A few years back we had once heard him say, 'Now I do nothing else, I only see'. How often had he spent the hot mid-days at Santiniketan, when every other inmate was resting within closed doors, sitting in an open verandah and gazing insatiably at the plains rolling out to the horizon. Every day he had watched the hour when the rosy dawn was born out of night's dark womb ; he had plunged deep in the darkness of the rainy season and drunk his fill of moonlight. And in the end he was prisoner in an artificially cooled dark room and had to ask, suddenly starting from sleep, 'Is it day or night?' The moonlight was no more than a shadow and clouds were invisible. In his world, day and night had been shorn of their multi-coloured garments and the cycle of seasons played no more. The chorus of joy that birds sang every morning in the ancient trees of the *ashrama* did not reach his ear, the rain pattered and the leaves murmured without breaking the silence of his world. Nature reached him in faint glimpses, in shadows and whispers, and in imagination. There had never been a man so fond of variety as he was : he had never been able to reside for many months at a stretch in the same place, nor live in the same house for long. He had spent his days in every manner of place and dwelling and had been a tireless traveller, too. And in the last days it was not easy even to move from one room to another, and travelling, of course, was out of the question. Chained as he was, perhaps his mind dwelt on the hills and plains, cities and rivers of all lands, and it was certain that he was haunted by memories of the Padma and by a desire to return to his beloved river. 'You belong to the shores of the Padma,' he told us, 'and have just seen Kopai that flows here! Here it is nearly as dry and hard as Rajputana. How far from Padma have I strayed.' Perhaps the thought would suddenly flit across his mind that he would feel better if he went down to the sea. But the Padma was far away and the sea farther still. Well then, he created variety for himself in that single room. The arrangement of the furniture of the room was altered every day, his easy-chair faced different directions, and we did not find the room arranged in the same manner on two consecutive days. Even this proved that Rabindranath was as great an artist in life as in literature. Not only the entirety of his life, but his mode of daily living was a perfect work of art. One had to come to Santiniketan to understand what a great concept of life he had actually realised, for here his life was indeed like a king's and when I say 'king' I mean it in its largest sense.

'Give me, oh, give me

My kingdom, my power, my glory,

Not the daily bread alone!—

cried D. H. Lawrence. It is possible that the tormented Lawrence would at last have been content if he had come to Santiniketan, for here, in the person of Rabindranath, he would have seen the true image of the lord of life.

Since his illness, Rabindranath slept very little and slightly. Fantastic dreams frequented him, and he talked in his sleep. He woke up by two o'clock in the morning and could not sleep again. Then he started talking or dictated some literary work. One day I sent him in writing some questions regarding the inter-relation of history and literature. I did not hope for more than that he would say a few words on the subject, but when we went to him the next morning the first thing he said was: 'What a lot of silly questions! Here you are'. Saying this, he handed over to me an essay in Mrs. Rani Chanda's handwriting. He had started work after waking from sleep and had got an essay ready before we had woken from ours. A couple of days later he found it inadequate and added another and a shorter essay. You might have asked him to do seemingly absurd things in the way of literary composition; it was not in him to say 'No' to any suggestion, and you would at least have come away with a gracious smile and an assurance that he would think it over. There wasn't any question to which he could not immediately reply and there wasn't any topic which he did not eagerly discuss. Here was a man who was always ready, always interested, and never bored. He had combined endless toil with endless leisure. In one sense, every day of his life was a holiday, and in another, there had never been a single 'off' hour in his mental workshop.

Leave-Taking

WE had not seen him in his youth and were born when he was middle-aged, and so we hungrily listen when our elders talk about those vanished days. As a race, we do not care to write autobiographies or memoirs, but luckily Rabindranath's childhood and youth have been preserved for us in some of his own books. A day will come when these works will be minutely read and people with beating hearts will search those pages for a glimpse of him. Little bits will be put together, reconstructed, and thus a final image of him will be stamped on the minds of future generations of Bengalis. But we who have seen him, and were able to go and sit at his feet—how are we to measure this incomparable good fortune! One got drunk on his greatness. He was one of the world's greatest men; he towered far above any other figure in the present-day world, and in the whole world's history how many are there who may rank with him! One's first reaction to seeing him was a feeling of enchantment. One gazed at him and pondered over all that he had written and done, and one was so overwhelmed that the breathing seemed to stop. Who

else could put us into this ecstasy of adoration! In whom else could we taste human greatness in so full a measure!

On the day we departed we saw the Poet in sick-bed. Little did I imagine what I would have to see. It was itself a shock to step into his room after the brilliant afternoon light spread all over sky and land. For the room was dark as night, lit only by a table-lamp burning in a corner. The Poet was reclining in what seemed to me an enormous easy-chair, propped up by several pillows. He was quite still and his eyes were closed. A young doctor and one of his secretaries were attending. As we entered he half opened his eyes and faintly uttered a few words. His right hand began to rise in blessing over our heads but dropped half way. I have not the words to say how I felt at the moment. It was as if the heart had received a sudden blow, I felt choked and overcome by a sort of stupor so that I could not even have a full gaze at him. We could breathe freely only when we came out into the open. The immortal poet was a constant companion of this golden blaze of light while the frail earthen vessel lay imprisoned in a closed room.



—The last appearance at the Santiniketan Mandir on April 14, 1940 (Bengali New Year Day, 1347) when he conducted the service

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Photo "Hindustan Standard"

—After two months in bed since he was brought down, seriously ill, from Kalimpong on September 29, 1940, he was taken to Santiniketan on November 18, 1940. This photo was taken at Howrah Station inside the railway carriage

Last Days With Gurudeva

By

AN ASRAMITE

THOUGHTS and feelings crowd in upon me in a painful confusion as I look back over the last few weeks. It seems unbelievable that he, from the warmth of whose presence we drew our inspiration, our strength, our joy, is no longer with us. We had taken that warmth for granted, as we take the warmth of the sun for granted—the sun after whom he was so appropriately named. Yet we knew that for all his god-like qualities, he was but mortal and would one day pass away; but being too human ourselves, the knowledge that the end was inevitable has in no way helped to abate the shock. Nor does the knowledge that the loss is common to the whole nation make it any the less for any one of us.

As the mind revives and tries to readjust its poise, after the first impact of grief has subsided, warm memories, winged with a variety of sentiments, assail one. Wonder that so rare a being, at once so majestic and so exquisite, should actually have lived in our midst; gratefulness that we were privileged to be near him and to have listened to his great utterance; shame that we did not sufficiently strive to be worthy of that privilege; regret at innumerable opportunities lost, never to be recovered; anger at our own unworthiness; self-pity

at our now orphaned state; and many other feelings which I cannot define

And yet indulgence in sorrow is not wholesome, and men must learn to subdue it without turning hard-hearted. He taught us that lesson over and over again, both by his noble words and by his own brave example. During the last few months, Death had snatched away, one after another, several of his dearest companions and associates. Charlie Andrews and Surendranath Tagore, Kalimohan Ghosh and Gourgopal Ghosh and that exquisite singer of his songs, "Khuku" (Amita Sen)—he had loved them all and, while they lived, had constantly thought of them. (How touching it was to see him put aside his important literary work and turn over the leaves of his books on Homoeopathic or Bio-chemic medicines whenever he heard that one of us in the Asrama was ill!) But when news of each death was broken to him, he uttered not a word of complaint, withdrew into himself, and emerged, unshaken, a tower of strength to us all.

*"Far as I gaze at the depth of Thy immensity,
I find no trace there of sorrow or death or
separation,*

*Death assumes its aspect of terror
And sorrow its pain*

*Only when, away from Thee,
I turn my face towards my own self."*

So he sang in one of his songs translated by himself after Andrews' death.

But though we drew our strength from him to the last, it was most painful to watch him struggle with his own physical suffering. Only those who attended on him day and night during those days could have any idea of the ruthless siege which the forces of death were slowly laying round him, of the acute mental suffering, natural to a sensitive spirit, as he felt his marvellous instruments of sight and sound grow feeble from day to day, of his battle with his own mind as he resigned himself to the condition of physical helplessness in which he lay exposed. How poignant and true are the lines written on the day before the operation!

*"Sorrow's dark night, again and again,
has come to my door."*

*A moving screen of varied fears—
Death's skilful handwork wrought in
Scattered gloom."*



1939
April 14

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AND yet during the whole course of this illness, which never really left him since the attack first laid him prostrate in September last, not once did he betray signs of morbidity or despair, and, what is truly amazing, he never lost his keen interest in things and events in the world outside. How excited he was when told of Miss Rathbone's open letter to the Indians. His physical condition was causing concern even at that time, and we were quite frightened of his excitement as he dictated the reply. "I do not care," he said, "what our British masters



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and their loyal henchmen in India will think or say about me. I must speak out what I feel"

And as he related how he had seen half-starved women and children stir up puddles of mud for a handful of drinking water, his voice broke down and tears streamed down the corners of his eyes. Later on when he was told that the general public, in appreciating his reply, had recalled his historic letter to the Viceroy over the Jallianwalla Bag tragedy, he smiled and remarked, "So the people haven't forgotten!"

Deeply and passionately as he loved and felt for his own people, his love and interest were not confined to them. He brooded over the outcome of the present war and worried over the fate of the innocent millions of all nations who had been dragged into the war as its victims, for no fault of their own. In particular, his sympathies went out to the Chinese and the Russians. He had hopes that the great social experiments of the latter would one day change the face of civilization all over the earth. Though he rejected much that he found cruel in the Communist philosophy, he was greatly impressed by the spectacle of a civilization, the benefits of whose achievements were equally enjoyed by all its people. He wished the Russians well in the war and was depressed whenever he read of reverses on their front. Nor, despite his sympathy with the other side, did he ever think of the Germans and the Japanese as the sole and unmitigated villains in the drama. The world—he had never tired of repeating years before the present burst-up—was caught in a trap set by certain tendencies in the modern civilization which were being encouraged and patronised by the governing classes in practically all the countries of the world. The cure of the evil must be something more fundamental than merely exterminating this people or that.

IN the midst of these big problems and of his own literary activity, which did not cease till the day of the operation in Calcutta, he constantly thought of his beloved Santiniketan and its little affairs. How happy he looked when he was told that the general kitchen had been thoroughly renovated and considerably extended and that under a new manager both the cooking and the serving of food had also greatly improved! "I hope they are using more *ghee* than oil," he said and went on to regret that it was not possible for him to see the new arrangements for himself. When it was suggested that it might be possible to take him round the new sights in the *Asrama* after his return from Calcutta, when he would be much better, he seemed pleased. A few days before he left for Calcutta, he sent for a copy of *Subhāshitaratna Bhāṇḍāgāra* from the Library and himself marked down the Sanskrit *slokas* (even though his eyes troubled him a great deal) and sent for Pandit Nitaibenode Goswami and explained to him how he wanted the *slokas* to be taught to the children. Nor did he forget to remind him of this the day before he left.

Suddenly he asked "Who is teaching Bengali in the School these days? I hope some one who truly loves literature and has a real sense of *rasa*—and not a mere erudite pedant. The children must catch the feeling of the sound from the voice of the teacher." He went on to explain how he used to lose himself in joy when teaching little children. His voice became hoarse as he added, "But I can no longer teach them myself, nor supervise." Immediately he was annoyed with himself and murmured, "I don't know how I have become so weak that I can hardly talk without my voice betraying me."

He saw to it himself that jars of lozenges or boxes of chocolates were always kept in his room at hand for little boys and girls, who never went to his room without coming out with one. Not even pariah dogs were excluded from his kindness. One of them managed to make himself an honoured inmate of Uttarayana by the simple process of seeking shelter under his chair. Each morning it would come and obstinately stand near him until he touched its head with his hand, when it would either sit down near his chair or a little further away. Nor did he forget to immortalise that dog in one of his poems. *Lalu* is still fed twice and is as well taken care of as any other pet.

His sense of humour never deserted him. His nurses and attendants will treasure as their greatest reward the kindly witticisms and pleasantries that he constantly exchanged with them. He could never get over his amusement at being fed on Glaxo, and would refer to himself as a "Glaxo baby". As he could take nourishment only in very small quantities which would gradually be increased, his amusement was very great when he was told that the dose prescribed for him was the same as for a two-month old baby. Since then each time Glaxo was served, he would enquire, "How many months old am I today?"



—He saw to it himself that jars of lozenges or boxes of chocolates were always kept in his room at hand for little boys and girls

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Next to children, I think, he loved the trees. During the summer vacation, when the scarcity of water in the wells had become a serious menace, he was much distressed at the fate of the trees. "Have you a *māhua* tree in your garden?" he would suddenly enquire. "If not, then you must plant some. When they grow, you will find how Santhal women always gather under them." He who was so reluctant to take any nourishment and would not touch the most carefully prepared delicacies, how eagerly and excitedly like a child he picked out and nibbled at a *jam* (*जाम*) when a bunch of them was brought to him from "his own tree" at the back of "Shyamali"! He kept the bunch near him and would tempt others: "Just taste one and see how sweet my *jams* are!"

He was very keen during those last days that the birthday *jayanti* of Abanindranath Tagore should be fittingly celebrated at Santiniketan. At all hours of the day he would send for Rathi Babu* or Suren Babu† or Nanda Babu‡ and discuss with them afresh the arrangements for the occasion.

AND so the days passed. His fever rose higher each evening and the nights were less restful. The doctors were obliged to come to the conclusion that he must be removed to Calcutta for further treatment. The decision upset him. "Why can't I be allowed to die in peace? Haven't I lived enough?" When it was explained to him that there

* Mr. Rathindranath Tagore, *Karmasachida, Visva-Bharati*.

† The artist Mr. Surendranath Kar, *Santiniketan-Sachiva*.

‡ The artist Mr. Nandalal Bose, Director of the *Santiniketan-Kalabhavan*.

was every hope of the disease being brought under control, and that the country still needed him in these critical times, he grudgingly submitted, only murmuring, "Perhaps I shall not see these trees again."

Painfully vivid is the memory of the fateful morning of the day he was taken to Calcutta. He was sitting in the room upstairs, waiting to be carried downstairs to the bus. I went in and touched his feet. He looked up sadly and did not smile. "চলান" (I go) was all he said, and then looked away. I shrank within myself, so ominous that simple word sounded. Slowly and carefully he was brought down and put on the bus. Marvellously beautiful he looked as he lay reclining inside, robed in a black gown, wearing dark glasses. As the bus moved forward, many suppressed their sobs, some clicked

their cameras, but the great majority sang "Ämäder Santiniketan". The joyous spirit of that song and the superb beauty of the form within the bus cured the temporary morbidity of spirit and revived and strengthened the hope that surely he will come back. Such a one cannot die. On both sides of the road to the station men and women had gathered to catch a glimpse of the passing bus and, if lucky, of the face within. By the time he was comfortably lodged in the beautiful saloon car, we had regained our spirits and were almost cheerful. "What a magnificent reception we shall arrange when he returns after a month! What happiness to look forward to!" I said to my companion as the train slowly steamed away. Miserable playthings of Fate! little did we know then that all we would bring back from Calcutta would be a few handfuls of ashes and a great load of sorrow.



—Slowly and carefully he was brought down on a stretcher and put in the bus



—Marvellously beautiful he looked as he lay reclining inside, robed in a black gown, wearing dark glasses

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হুঃখের আঁধার রাত্রি যারে যারে
এসেছে আঁধার যারে ।
একবারে অল্প তার মেঘেছি
কষ্টের বিকৃত ভাষা, আসের বিকট ভঙ্গী যত,
অন্ধকারে ছন্দায় ভূমিকা ভাষার ।
বতবার ভয়ের সুখোঁস তার করেছি বিবাস,
ভতবার ধরেছে অনব পলায়ন ।
এই হার-জিত খেলা, জীবনের বিখ্যা এ কুহক,
শিতকাল হ'তে বিলুপ্ত পথে পথে এই বিভীষিকা,
হুঃখের পরিবাসে ভরা ।
ভয়ের বিভিন্ন চলাছবি—
বৃজ্যর বিশৃঙ্খল পিঙ্গ বিকীর্ণ আঁধারে ।

Sorrow's dark night, again and again,
Has come to my door.
Its only weapon, I saw,
Was pain's twisted brow, fear's hideous gestures
Preluding its deception in darkness.
Whenever I have believed in its mask of dread,
Fruitless defeat has followed.
This game of defeat and victory is life's delusion ;
From childhood, at each step, clings this spectre,
Filled with sorrow's mockery,
A moving screen of varied fears—
Death's skilful handiwork wrought in scattered gloom.



Farewell at Santiniketan—July 25, 1941

The Last Few Days

IT was finally decided to take Gurudeva down to Calcutta for the purpose of the operation, which now seemed inevitable. Towards the beginning of July, his general condition showed very considerable deterioration; there was hardly a day when he did not run a temperature, the intake of food had decreased alarmingly, and, worst of all, much of his characteristic sparkling "joy of life" was missing. The last seemed most ominous to us who knew that where his well-being was concerned, his mind was the most important factor.

In the conditions prevailing then, the journey to Calcutta, though of a bare hundred-mile distance, was not a very easy proposition. There was only one train in the day which suited us, but it was also one of the slowest trains in the whole East Indian Railway service, requiring no less than full six hours to do this short run. Any special arrangement over the railway was very difficult,—for one reason, if the news of his going, the date and train had leaked out, the crowd *en route* and at Howrah, would make a comfortable journey almost an impossibility. Adoration and curiosity of the multitude have no limits.

Most of the difficulties of the journey were, however, satisfactorily solved, thanks to the help offered us by one of the highest officers of the East Indian Railway, who himself saw to all railway arrangements and undertook to come down to Bolpur the night before the journey and escort Gurudeva in his

By

ONE NEAR HIM*

own saloon to Calcutta. He also arranged that the platform of arrival at Howrah was to be changed at the last moment, so that the crowd would be kept out, even if one gathered at the Station. The date of his departure and the name of the train were kept a secret, even the ashrama people, in general, knowing about the final arrangements barely a day before. The road to Bolpur Station from the ashrama is a standing disgrace to the District Board of Birbhum; during the rains in particular, it is full of innumerable pot-holes and muddy patches. But even our somnolent District Board authorities woke up at long last and made some temporary repairs over the road during the night, ensuring a more or less smooth passage for the bus in which Gurudeva was to go to the Station.

Kathi-babu¹ and Anil-babu² left the day before (24th July) to look after the final arrangements in Calcutta and Suren-babu³ remained in charge at Santiniketan and during the journey.

* The writer of this article had served the Poet in a personal capacity for the last few years.—ED., C. M. G.

¹ Mr. Rathindranath Tagore.

² Mr. Anil K. Chanda, Secretary to the Poet.

³ Mr. Surendranath Kar, the Santiniketan *Sachiva*.

The farewell—nobody then suspected that it was to be the *farewell*—from the ashrama, was most touching. From early morning, the whole ashrama, men, women and children, all gathered in the spacious compound of Uttarayana and awaited his coming down from his room on the first floor. At about 7-30 he was brought down in a specially constructed stretcher,—the same one, alas, in which he was also to make his last journey, when life had flown out of his body, to the cremation ground at Nimtollah. In that large gathering, there were people who had known him from their very birth, people who had shunned the wider world and its prizes and its glamour in order to serve him in the seclusion of Santiniketan, young boys and girls who had come from the four corners of the country with faith and love, to have their young lives sanctified with his blessings. Their hearts were heavy and eyes tearful. In deep silence and with mute salutations, they saw him off. The bus slowly glided out of the gates ; out of a thousand throats rang out the ashrama song "Our Santiniketan, She is the darling of our hearts". Gurudeva, for one short moment, looked back,—his own eyes were not dry either.

THE train arrived at Howrah, July 25, a few minutes before the scheduled time. The Press did not know that he was coming by this train, and, thanks to the successful ruse of the staff in announcing a wrong platform of arrival, there was nobody barring a few of our party at the platform. Helped by the staff and our own men, we slowly conveyed him to a waiting van on the stretcher, and soon after 3-15, he reached his ancestral house at Jorasanko. The principal sitting room, on the first floor, had been converted into the sick room with all the furniture and furnishings removed, and he was taken up there.

The day was sultry, the journey tedious, and when he reached Jorasanko it seemed as if very little

of life was left in him. He was thoroughly exhausted,—and he could not even be removed from the stretcher to his bed. He lay there—pale and wan, his eyes a little vague. Towards the evening, he revived to some extent and exchanged a few words with the nurses. During the night he slept well, as a result of which, the next morning (July 26), he looked somewhat fresh and restful. After his morning cup of coffee, he was helped on to his chair, and, as it seemed, he was in a mood to talk. Dr. Abanindranath Tagore and others who had come to enquire after him, were asked to his room and a most lively conversation ensued. Mr. Samarendranath Tagore, Prof. Charu Chandra Bhattacharya and Dr. Amiya Chakravarty were also in the company. Gurudeva was in a reminiscent mood, talking of his young days, particularly of the Swadeshi period. His memory of these days had been lately roused and refreshed on reading the manuscript of Abanindranath's memoirs, now in press. From the way he talked with vigour and interest, it was difficult to understand that he had hardly ten more days to live. Suddenly he turned towards Abanindranath and said, "Aban, I hear you have refused to join the celebration the Visva-Bharati wants to arrange in honour of your seventy-first birthday." Even before Abanindranath could say a word in explanation, he continued with great warmth : "What right have you to deny what the people want to do in honour of the event? It would be not merely a tribute to you personally, it is also a tribute to the great art movement which it has been your good fortune to initiate and to lead. Moreover, such a public tribute would have an educative value also." Abanindranath meekly replied, "Since you so desire, I shall submit myself to the torture of a public reception". After the party had left, Gurudeva continued : "Of all those who have served Bengal, I do not think, any one deserves well of his people more than Aban. He has taught a whole nation to understand Beauty, to look for Beauty, to appreciate Beauty—*Aban Saraswati's Baraputra* (Aban is the favoured child of Saraswati)."



—In deep silence and with mute salutations they saw him off. Their hearts were heavy and their eyes tearful

THE operation had been fixed for Wednesday, the 30th July. All necessary preparations were being hurriedly gone through though the patient himself was not yet aware of the exact date.

From the 26th to the 29th, that is, the days in Calcutta before the operation, his condition was much the same. A little fresh in the morning—clear in mind and interested enough in life to call for the newspapers—and discuss the war news, particularly of the Russian Front; from noon, rise in temperature, increasing uneasiness and, occasionally, almost a state of stupor. He did not talk much these days though he still enjoyed the company of his people and sometimes even cracked a joke or two.

In preparation of the operation he had to suffer daily a painful injection of Glucose in the vein (50 c.c. at a time—once or twice even 100 c.c.). These little worries, he found most annoying. On the 26th, soon after the injection had been administered, there was violent rigor which completely unnerved us. We never had such an experience before; fortunately, the doctor had not yet left the house, and the trouble could be controlled before it went too far.

On the evening of the 29th, that is, the day before the operation, he asked Jyoti-babu* to tell him exactly how painful the operation would be. He said, if he knew from before, he could prepare himself better. Gurudeva was very fond of Jyoti-babu, particularly appreciating his keen sense of humour. Jyoti-babu was also quite free and unconstrained in behaviour with him. In answer to his query, Jyoti-babu said: "Nothing at all, Sir. We shall apply some local anaesthetics, and even though you would be fully conscious, you would not know that they are cutting your body up. We shall put a screen to hide the cruel surgeon from your view and you would not know he is there. Why, we shan't be surprised if you were even to compose a poem with the operation actually in progress". Gurudeva laughed heartily at this and said: "If it calls for no greater pain than composing a poem, well, I am ready. Call in your surgeon". Jyoti-babu, in order to reassure him, added: "We are taking no risks whatsoever nor sparing any safeguards. We surgeons do not forget that সাবধানের মার নেই (there is no end to precautions). Gurudeva retorted, "But do not also forget: Nor is there any precaution against the End": মারের সাবধান নেই।

Jyoti-babu would not, however, tell him that the operation was fixed for the morrow. But Gurudeva certainly guessed from certain preliminaries and changes in the treatment, that the date could not be far off. Late in the evening, he sent for Mrs. Rani Chanda, who used to work as his amanuensis during the last few months, to take down a poem. It began: "ভূমির স্বপ্নের রাতি, বার বার এসেছে আমার ঘরে" ['Sorrow's dark night, again and again, has come to my door'] After his death it was published under the caption "Death" in certain papers

and wrongly described by them as his 'last poem'. In fact, there was yet another poem in store for us. He did not also give any title to the poem.

The fateful 30th eventually arrived,—and from early morning, the whole house looked like a hospital, with doctors coming and going, and assistants busily engaged in fitting up a temporary operation theatre on the eastern verandah, adjacent to the sick room. Gurudeva, however, was still in blissful ignorance. He now composed his last poem "তোমার সৃষ্টির পথ রেখে আকীর্ণ করি বিচিরি ছলনাজালে, হে ছলনাময়ী" ['You have covered the path of your creation in a mesh of varied wiles, Thou Guileful One']. As usual, when, line by line, it was completed, it was read out to him. He chided the scribe for making some lame rhymes and desired to make some changes. He, however, was already tired and could not go on. He said: "How soon I get exhausted these days. The doctors assure me that all would be all right after the operation; let the poem, therefore, wait." The poem remained untouched to the last and has since then been published, as originally dictated.

His daughter-in-law, Sreemati Pratima Devi, was herself lying very seriously ill at Santiniketan, and from there had sent through a messenger a letter to Gurudeva to reach him before the operation.

Gurudeva, after he had rested for a while, dictated for her a letter, and, in a faltering hand, he signed it himself "Baba Mashai". That was the last time he held the pen—the pen with which he had conquered the world and Death. It is also in fitness of things that his last message should have been for one, who, for the last thirty years, had no other thought, no other work but to make his life happy and comfortable.

At about 10-30 A.M., the principal surgeon, Dr. L. M. Banerjee came into his room and, after a short examination, said in a calculatedly casual manner: "Everything seems all right, why should we not have the operation today? Now?" For a moment, Gurudeva felt a little nonplussed, and then said, "Perhaps, it is all right. I am ready".

After a while he was put on a stretcher and carried out to the operation table in the verandah. The surgeons took charge of him and we had to withdraw.

With a heart full of unknown fears and faltering hopes, we, about a dozen of his people, kept ourselves huddled together in a neighbouring room. Time for us seemed to have stopped altogether. It was hardly an hour, and we thought we had waited for an eternity. At 11-45, the doctors came out and said the operation was over,—and it was successfully performed. The patient's condition was as fine as could be expected. That was the bulletin which was given to the Press. Mahatmaji was also informed of the operation.

* Dr. Jyoti Prakash Sircar, a nephew of Sir Nilratan Sircar

IN the evening the surgeon came to examine and felt satisfied with the patient's condition. Gurudeva seemed even cheerful, and when Dr. Banerjee enquired if the operation hurt him much, he replied with a pale smile: "Why force me to a lie?" We realized the operation could not have been entirely painless.

From the look of things, we felt everything was really well and there was no cause for worry whatsoever. But the night was unpleasant; he slept hardly at all, even though bromide was administered twice in the night. He was restless, feeling dry and parched in the mouth and the throat. Barley water and Glucose water were being given him in frequent short sips.

The day after the operation (31st July), partly because of the disturbed night he had, his condition worsened. There was a rise in temperature and the pulse was also quite quick. He complained of pain in the wound and of a general feeling of uneasiness. The doctors made frequent examinations, held hurried consultations with one another, and they did not look happy. But we were assured that such a setback was nothing unusual after an operation. The night was, however, better, with snatches of sound sleep. On the third day of the operation (1st August), there was a marked all-round improvement; temperature came down considerably, pulse was steadier. He also took an appreciable quantity of liquid nourishment. The improvement was maintained during the night, and on Saturday morning (2nd August), we felt so sure that the danger was over, that it was decided that Rathi-babu would go to Santiniketan by the evening train in view of Pratima Devi's continued illness. But trouble started soon after. Gurudeva again began to feel restless and complained of pain and uneasiness in the stomach. Temperature once again mounted up,—pulse also showed a steep rise. Towards evening a new trouble appeared—occasional fits of hiccough. Though at the beginning it did not seem very persistent or acute, it was to cause grave worry later on. The night brought in no relief; on the contrary, sleep was hardly possible on account of hiccough. On Sunday morning (3rd August) we felt quite panicky and thought it advisable to ask Pratima Devi to come to Calcutta, if the journey was not altogether impossible. From

the afternoon, some improvement was once again noticed, reviving our faltering hopes. The night was not too bad either, but from Monday (4th August) the condition definitely worsened, and when Pratima Devi came to see him in the morning, he hardly talked with her. As a matter of fact, from now onwards, he was hardly conscious at all; every hour new and worse symptoms began to show themselves. From Tuesday the 5th, the critical stage set in. A bad cough had been worrying him, and hiccough seemed almost continuous. Innumerable palliatives for hiccough were tried one after another, but to no effect. In the evening his old and lifelong friend and physician Sir Nilratan came to see him. Though himself badly stricken by age and disease, he could not but rush to Gurudeva's bedside when he heard of his condition. But Gurudeva was already in a state of coma; he did not seem to recognise anybody; his eyes looked as blank as before. Whatever hopes still lingered in us completely vanished when Sir Nilratan, as he was leaving the room, suddenly turned back and had a long look at the Poet. It was—we knew—Sir Nilratan's farewell to his friend.

In the night, the condition became very grave, and the doctors in attendance tried their last remedies. These had some effect, however, and the night passed. With dawn (6th August) came back hope; we thought possibly the worst was over, and the tide would now turn in our favour. It seemed impossible to us that it could be otherwise. But, alas, our hopes were all dupes. It was now a hurried sliding downwards—with a worse and new trouble added every minute. He could not swallow even a sip of water, the eyes were swollen and they were watery. From the afternoon, we were told to be ready for the end. Slowly and wearily, the hours rolled by and the shadow of death was over us. From midnight till three in the morning, he somehow struggled on, but after that, it was only waiting for the inevitable. The dawn peeped in (7th August), and there was no trace of life in him excepting the gasping breath. At 10 A.M. the doctors began to administer oxygen but it made very little difference. The sound of breath became fainter and fainter and soon after 12, it ceased finally.

We lost the battle, and Death wrested him away from us.

*When death comes and whispers to me
"Thy days are ended,"
let me say to him, "I have lived in love
and not in mere time."
He will ask "Will thy songs remain?"
I shall say "I know not, but this I know
that often when I sang I found my eternity."*

—RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Last Hours

By

AMIYA CHAKRAVARTY

WHEN we watched him in pain, through the long hours, it seemed as if he was taking upon himself the final weight of human mortality before leaving this dearly loved Earth. There was a feeling of agony willingly endured, so that he could share our sorrows to the full. And yet the pain of life which visited him was evidently not his choice alone, the nature of existence had forced it upon him. We too shared a responsibility for his suffering. There he was ; helpless, a child and poet of life, and we could do nothing for him. Nothing for him who through a life-time of wonder had brought us where we are, whose gifts have filled our days. Humanity, pure in knowledge—as he saw it—would someday bring the answering gift with which love dispels pain. But when? How far the outer waves of pain touched the levels below his general unconsciousness, in the last two days, we cannot tell. Even though he seemed to struggle, there was a far-awayness in his face : that of mountain ranges beyond the reach even of everlasting snows or glacial storms. But suffering was there.

IN the days immediately before, it was fully conscious pain which he met with limitless spiritual manhood. No age was there, but the rigour of eternal youth, in the fortitude with which life's struggle was met. Physical suffering he would touch with laughter, as he ever did in his life, transmuting agony into a living flame ; a new light added to a universe of light. The ever-deepening background became a night of infinite tenderness ; unknown stars sparkled beyond life's sky. In one of his last poems he speaks of death's skilful handiwork, jewelling the scattered gloom ; this he wrote before the operation. Those who had won in the game of life-and-death, could enjoy this pattern of death's art, even as one could enjoy life in paying its price in ceaseless victory. His vision comes to us as a challenge. Neither death nor life is a finality ; they are part of our being. What then is being? We shall know as we grow in truth and blessedness.

HE had come to the heart of things. The sky and earth, life's concourse, the river-side market, Bengal's green fields, and flowers, the hum of work in city and home ; these had mingled in his beatific vision. War's cries came across the ocean but destruction is not the end of life. Man will live. Wrongs he could challenge, with human means, because he was with all and had the right of love to judge. Through

his physical suffering he renewed his kinship with physical man—humanity's great self we might call it—and even in poems written during grave illness, he created a new level of verse. In lucid lines, bare and unadorned, he made us see and not merely know, the world's usual day.

His life itself had become living verse ; pain and struggle cast no shadow but enriched the poetry of existence.

THEN death came. Around it surged, even while life and death were meeting in his last moments, the stormy sea of humanity. With its frenzy, its unleavened emotions of man's crowded self, it rushed and revolved in primal movements. As they bore him away, in the afternoon, on his face was more than forgiveness. Reverence, unexpressed in our turmoil, had touched the mortal form that he had for ever left. During pain, even while yet conscious, an infinite wistfulness would come over his face ; was it final acceptance, and yearning, and perhaps, also, the faintest reproach that this had to be thus? At least nobody could be there without feeling reproach within himself, even while sublimity filled our hearts. But in death, not even a trace of reproach or of feeling was there in his expression, but the unconcerned benediction of divinity, the divinity of all things. This cannot be expressed, but seen.

THE LAST POEM

You have covered the path of your creation
in a mesh of varied wiles,
Thou Guileful One.
Deftly have you set a snare of false beliefs
in artless lives.
With your deceit
you have left your mark on Greatness
taking away from him the secrecy of night.
The path your star lights for him
is the translucent path of his heart,
ever illumined by a simple faith.
Though tortuous outside
it is straight within,
that is his pride.
Though men call him futile,
in the depth of his heart he finds truth
washed clean by the inner light.
Nothing can cheat him ;
he carries to his treasure-house
his last reward.
He who easefully could bear your wile,
receives from your hands
the right to everlasting Peace.

Calcutta, July 30, 1941
9-30 A.M.

—THE LAST HOURS

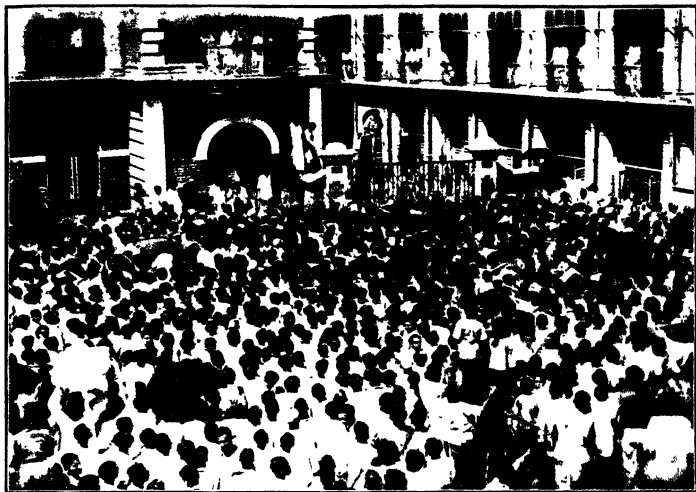


Photo D. Katan

IN THE COURTYARD OF THE TAGORE HOUSE

—THE LAST JOURNEY: I

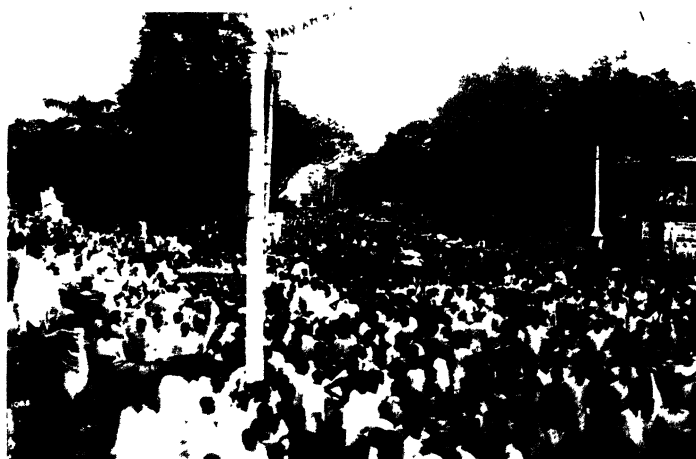


Photo Kanchan Mukerji

IN THE STREETS OF THE CITY OF HIS BIRTH

“হে মহাত্মার শেখ, হে বিদায় অনিমেঘ,
হে সৌম্য বিবাদ,
কণেক দাঁড়াও স্থির, দুছায়ে নবন-নীল
করো আশীর্বাদ।

“কণেক দাঁড়াও স্থির, পদতলে নমি শির
তব বাত্রাপথে,
মিতর প্রদীপ বরি নিঃশব্দে আরতি করি
মিতর অগতে ॥”

With your flashing sword cut
 in twain
 The tangle of doubt and
 feeble desire.

Victory !

Come, Implacable !
 Come, you who are terrible
 in your whiteness.
 O Light, your drum sounds
 in the march of fire,
 And the red torch
 is held on high ;
 Death dies in a burst
 of splendour.

*Pandit Kshiti Mohan Sen and
 Pandit Vidhusekhar Sastri acted
 jointly as ACHARYYAS in the cere-
 mony.*



—All assembled went round Maharshi Debendranath's prayer-seat under the Chhatim tree

*"Karo Tnar Nama Gan Jaladin
 Rahe Dehe Pran." ('Sing His
 glory so long as the life remains
 in the body').*

*More than two thousand people,
 including inmates of the Asram,
 ex-students and people from the
 neighbouring rural areas watched
 the ceremony with deep reverence.*

*After the ceremony, there was
 a continuous stream of people
 towards Uttarayan, where the
 scent of flowers and burning
 incense filled the air of the room
 last occupied by the Poet and the
 verandah where his bed-sleat,
 arm-chair and writing desk stood
 as poignant memory's silent sign-
 posts.*

*Over 3,000 poor were fed on the
 occasion.*

*The choir sang the opening
 song, all standing—"Tomari
 Ichcha Hauk Purna Karunamaya
 Swami" ('Thy will be done, Oh!
 Merciful Lord!') composed by the
 Poet many years ago.*

*The SRADH commenced with the
 singing of the song: "Samukhe
 Shanti-parabar, bhasao tarani hey
 Karnadhar" ('In front lies the
 ocean of peace, launch the boat,
 Helmsman').*

*The ceremony came to a close
 after the Poet's song "Tomari
 Ashime Prana Mana Laye Jata
 Dure Ami Dhai" ('Far as I gaze
 at the depth of thy immensity')
 had been sung in chorus.*

*Finally, all assembled went
 round Maharshi Debendranath's
 prayer-seat under the CHHATIM
 tree singing Dwijendranath's song*



*—More than three thousand poor were fed on the occasion, the boys and
 girls of Santiniketan serving them*

The Opening Song

সমুখে শান্তি-পারাবার,
ডাঙাও তবুগী হে কর্ণধার।
তুমি হবে চিরদাখী,
লও লও হে কোড় পাকি,
অগাধের পথে জলিবে
জ্যোতি কুবতারকার।
মুক্তিলাভ, তোমার কমা তোমার দয়া
হবে চিরপাথের চিরপাডার।
হয় যেন যজ্ঞের বন্ধনক্ষয়,
বিহাট বিশ্ব বাহু মেলি' লয়,
পায় অন্তরে নির্ভয় পরিচয়
মহা অজানার।

In front lies the ocean of peace,
Launch the boat, Helmsman.
You will be the comrade ever,
Take O take him in your lap.
In the path of the Infinite
will shine the 'Dhruva-tara' (1).
Giver of Freedom, your forgiveness, your mercy
Will be wealth inexhaustible in the eternal journey.
May the mortal bonds perish,
May the vast universe take him in its arms,
and may he know in his fearless heart
The Great Unknown.*

The Ritual of the Vedas and Upanishadas†

যো দেবোজ্যৌ যোঽস্ত
যো বিশ্বং সুবনমাবিব্য।
য আচরিত্ব যো বনস্পতিত্ব
তস্মৈ দেবায় নমোনমঃ।

The God Who is in fire, in water, Who pervades the entire universe; He Who is in plants, in trees, to Him we make our obeisance again and again.

সত্যং জ্ঞানমনন্তং ব্রহ্ম।
জ্ঞানন্দরূপমমৃতং ব্রহ্মাতি।
হ্যান্তং শিবমহুতম।

He Who is our Creator, our Preserver, the Ordainer of all our happiness; He Who is the Life of our life and the source of all our blessings; He by Whose grace we are having our body and mind, our intellect and strength, our knowledge and faith; He Who is always protecting our body, mind and soul from various troubles; He is the Supreme Being, He is Truth, He is Knowledge, He is the Infinite. He is manifesting Himself as the Bliss, the Immortal; He is the Calm, the Beneficent, the One without a second. With love, with mind turned back from all else, let us offer our souls to that Bliss Who is without a second.

সমস্যাগাচ্ছুকামকায়মব্রহ্মমজ্জাবিরং
কবিন্মনীষী পরিভূঃ স্বেয়মমূৰ্য্যচাতর্য্যতোঃখান্দ
ব্যবধাচ্ছাস্বতীন্দ্র্যঃ সসাম্যঃ।
এতস্মাজ্জাযতে প্রাণো মনঃ সর্বোনিদ্রাশ্চ।
স্বং বায়ুর্জ্যোতির্যাপঃ পৃথিবী বিশ্বস্য চারিষী।
মহাদুস্মাশ্চিত্তপতি ময্যাত্তপতি সূর্য্যঃ।
ময্যাবিন্দ্রজ বায়স্ব স্তুত্বাচাবতি পঞ্চমঃ।

He is all-pervading, bright, bodiless, without sinews, without scar, pure, unpierced by evil; He is all-seeing, the guide of the mind, the greatest of all and self-manifest; from all times He is ordering objects for the use of created beings according to their natures. From Him have come into being

life, mind and the senses, and the sky, air, light, water and this earth, the container of them all. For fear of Him fire burns, for fear of Him the sun gives heat, for fear of Him clouds shower rain, winds blow, and death moves about.

অসত্যো মা সন্নময়
তমস্যো মা ন্যোতিগেময়
মৃত্যোর্মোক্ষ্যন্তং গময়
আখিরাবীন্দ্র্যমৃশি।
হুত্ব যস্যে হুত্বিষ্যং হুত্বং তেন মাং পাহি নিবস্ম।

Lead me from the unreal to Thy Real Self; lead me from darkness to Thy Luminous Self; lead me from death to Thy Deathless Self. O Thou Self-manifest, be manifest unto me. O Thou the Terrible One, with that gracious face of Thine, protect me always.

অঁ মহাবাদিনৌ বদন্তি।
যতো বা ব্রহ্মানি শ্রুতানি জায়ন্তে।
যেন জাতানি জীবন্তি।
যত্ব প্রয়ত্বমিসংবিদ্যন্তি।
তদ্বিজ্ঞাস্যস্বেন। তদ্ব্রহ্ম।
জ্ঞানন্দাভ্যেব লব্ধিমানি শ্রুতানি জায়ন্তে।
জ্ঞানন্দেন জাতানি জীবন্তি।
জ্ঞানন্দ প্রয়ত্বমিসংবিদ্যন্তি।
যতো বাণো নিবসন্তে অপ্রাপ্য মনসা সত্ব।
জ্ঞানন্দং ব্রহ্মসৌ বিদ্বান্ ন ভিমেতি কৃতজ্ঞন ॥

* In translating into English the Sanskrit text of the Vedas and Upanishads, the explanatory and interpretative Bengali rendering by Maharshi Debendranath Tagore as given in the Anusthan Paddhati of the Adi Brahmo Samaj has been followed more than the original.—ED., C. M. G.

† This song, which has been translated into English by Dr. Amiya Chakravarty, for the September number of The Modern Review was composed by the Poet on 3rd December, 1939 for a new stage version of Dak-ghar ('The Post Office'). The song was, however, never used, and the Poet expressed the wish that it should be sung after his own death.

(1) The bright pole-star, which in the Bengali word "Dhruva" carries the significance of steadfastness and unfailing guidance.

एसो व सः ।

रसं ह्येवार्थं सन्धानानी भवति ।

कोहो बान्धात् कः प्राध्यातुं यदेव आकाश आनन्दो न स्यात् ।

एषको बान्धात्प्राति । यदा ह्येवैष एतस्मिन्प्रदोऽनात्म्येऽनिरुद्धे-
निलयनेऽनर्थं प्रतिष्ठां विन्दते अथ सोऽनर्थं गतो भवति ।

यतो वाचो निवर्त्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह ।

आनन्दं ब्रह्मस्यो विद्वान् न विनेति कदाचन ॥

The expounders of the Vedas say: He from Whom all these beings have come into existence, He by Whom after coming into existence all these are kept alive, and He towards Whom all these go and into Whom all these enter at the time of the dissolution of the universe; have a desire to know Him thoroughly; He is the Supreme Being, the Bliss. These beings come into existence from the Supreme Being, the Bliss; after having come into existence these are kept alive by the Supreme Being, the Bliss; and at the time of the dissolution of the universe, these go towards and enter into the Supreme Being, the Bliss. He who has known the Bliss of the Supreme Being, from Whom unrealised mind and words turn back, he is not afraid of any one. This Supreme Being is the Joy, the source of all satisfaction. The individual soul enjoys felicity by realising the Supreme Being, the Joy. Who would have exerted himself physically, who would have lived, if this Supreme Being had not been in the Heavens? He is the One Who deals out felicity to the people. At the time when the devotee lives without fear in this invisible, bodiless, inexpressible, uncontained Supreme Being, it is then that he achieves fearlessness. He who has known the Bliss of the Supreme Being, from Whom unrealised mind and words turn back, he is never afraid.

एवास्य परमा गतिरेवास्य परमा सम्पत्

एषोऽस्य परमो लोक एषोऽस्य परम आनन्दः ।

एतस्त्वंवानन्द्वन्मानानि भूतानि मात्रासुपजीवन्ति ॥

He is the Supreme Refuge of the individual soul, He is his Supreme Fulfilment, He is his Supreme Universe, He is his Supreme Bliss. All other created beings enjoy only a minute particle of the felicity of this Supreme Bliss,

ओं य एकोऽवर्षो बहुधा वसिष्ठागोत्र

वर्षाननेकाभिहितार्थो दधाति ।

विचेति चान्ते विश्वमादौ स देवः

स नो बुद्ध्या शुभया संयुक्तु ॥

ओं एकमेवाद्वितीयम् ।

He Who is One and without any visible form; He Who, with His knowledge of the necessities of created beings, ordains various desired objects by His manifold powers; by Whom is pervaded the entire universe, its beginning, middle and end; He is the Radiant Supreme Being. May He give us that understanding which leads to good actions.

Om, The One without a second.

समोश्वाहा परमं मोहचरं

सं देवतानां परमं च देवतम् ।

पति पतीनां परमं परस्तात्

विदाम देवं सुवनेशमोक्षम् ॥

य तस्य कार्यं करवाच विचिरे

य तस्मैमान्वाच्यविक्रम इत्येतो ।

परास्य वसिष्ठिविषेय भूतो

स्वाभाविकी ज्ञानसक्रिया य ॥

न तस्य कश्चित् पतिरस्ति लोके

न येतिता नैव य तस्य लिङ्गम् ।

स कारवां करवाविपाचिरो

न चास्य करिष्यन्तिता न चाविपः ॥

एष देवो विश्वकर्मा महात्मा सदा जनानां हृदये सन्निविष्टः ।

इदा मनीषा मनसाभिरुद्धो य एतद्विदुस्तदास्ते भवन्ति ॥

Him I know, the Great Lord, the Greatest of lords; the Deity, the Greatest of deities; the Master of masters; the Greatest of the great; the God, Who is Lord of the universe, to Whom all praise is due.

Actionless is He, bodiless; none other equals or excels Him; Supreme is His Energy, multiform, so is it heard; innate in It is His manifestation as Knowledge and Force.

No master has He in the universe, no lord; no distinguishing mark; from Him does creation flow; He is Lord of the soul; no progenitor has He, no lord.

Creator of the universe is He, this God, the Great Spirit; His seat is always in the heart of man; they who realise Him with heart, intellect and mind intent, attain to deathlessness.

“देवा यन्नास्तथा नागा गन्धर्वाप्सरसो ऽधराः ।

क्रूराः सर्पा छप्पारिच तरवो जिह्मगाः स्रगाः ॥

विद्याधरा जलाधारास्तथैवाकाशगामिनः ।

निराहाराश्च ये जीवाः पापे चरन् रताश्च ये ॥”

May everyone be contented today. May all created beings from gods, demi-gods down to the meanest find contentment today. May everyone, hungry, thirsty, sinful or virtuous find contentment today.

“आमहसुबनाहोका देवर्षिर्पितृमानवाः ।

तृण्यन्तः पितरः सर्वे मातृमातामाहादयः ।

अतीतकुलकोटीनां तसद्विपनिबास्मिन् ।

मया दत्तेन तोयेन तृण्यन्तः सुवन्नम्रयः ॥”

May everyone find supreme contentment today. Those millions of families who have departed this life and those who are now inhabiting different countries and different divisions of the earth, may the shower of contentment be upon all of them today. May this shower give satisfaction to the three worlds today.

इदं पितृभ्यो नमो अस्तु अथ

ये पूर्वान्तो य उपरास ह्युः ।

ये पार्थिवे रजसि आ निषत्वा

ये वा नूनं धृज्जनाद विभु ॥

Those who have departed to the next world, they are the ancestors. My salutations to all of them today, to those who are my elders, and to those who are my youngsters. Some of them might have their seats today on the dust of this earth, some others in another beautiful, majestic world. All of them have come here today, my salutations to all of them.

ये च इह विजरो ये च वैद्य
वीर्यं विद्यं वा त्वं न प्रदिदम् ॥

Those ancestors who are present here today, and those who are not present, those whom I know and those whom I do not know, my salutations to all of them today.

त आगमन्तु त इह भूम्नु
आचिरु वन्तु ते आम्नु अस्मान् ॥

May they all come here today, in this place where we are performing this ceremony in honour of the departed. May they hear the words which are in our inmost hearts. May they give us encouragement by accepting our prayer, may they protect us by fulfilling the desire of our hearts,

May they inspire our hearts with right understanding and words. May they keep our understanding fixed to-day in the truth of the universe. May they enable us to render service and goodness and reverence.

प्रहि प्रेह पथिभिः पूर्वभि-
यन्ना नः पूर्व विजरो परेभ्युः ।

By the ancient path used by our ancestors from the beginning of time when they made their departure, proceed, you also, and begin your journey.

संगच्छः विभुभिः समेते-
हा पूतं परमं व्योमम् ।

On the strength of your deeds of virtue, go to the highest heaven, and there meet the ancestors, meet the God of Death.

हिरण्यवाच पुनस्त्वमेहि
संगच्छन् तन्वा सुवर्णः ।

All that is unclean leave today, and with body beautiful, radiant and pure, go and join them this day in that heaven.

तपसा ये कृत्वाऽपराधः स्या ये रुदन्तु ।
तपो ये चरन्ति महत्तः किंचिदवापि गच्छताम् ॥

Amongst those, go, you also, amongst those who cannot be approached because of their great devotion, who have reached Heaven because of their great devotion, who have attained beatitude because of their great devotion.

ये किंत्वं श्रुतसाता श्रुतजाता श्रुतादृष्टः ।
आपोद् तपस्वतो वम तपोत्र आपि गच्छताम् ॥

Amongst those, go, you also, O devotee with self under control, amongst those earlier devotees who dedicated their lives to the attainment of beatitude, who entered into new life in course of that attainment, and the work of whose life was progress in such attainment.

सहस्रकोटः कपो ये गोपाः स्निह्यन्तम् ।
आपोद् तपस्वतो वम तपोत्र आपि गच्छताम् ॥

Amongst those, go, you also, O great devotee, amongst those sages who are devoted to the quest of God, who are poets endowed with prophetic vision, by the side of whose radiance the light of the sun even is faint.

हृषामि ते मनसा मन इदमाह् पुष्टाह् वपुस्तुष्टाह् एहि ।

With our mind we invoke your mind today, be one in love with the life in our home.

इहेषि वनस्तस्मिन् विन इहम् ।
इहेषि व वयस्तदा वयाभा रूपः इतः ॥

Stay here, take away our misery and make us great; be one with us in our mind and endeavour; with new strength and energy, stay here, unrepelled.

परेभ्युः सुतः न येतु ।

May death vanish from our midst, may immortality be revealed unto us.

आम दादधेः कृत्विमानि भूताणि जायन्ते ।
आमन्देन जातानि जी श्रान्ताम् प्रकल्पमसिः शक्तिः ॥

All things have their origin in Bliss; all things have their being in Bliss; all things enter into and are absorbed in Bliss.

अवाद्गुरुः पति भगवत्पति सुरः ।
अगाद्गुरुः वायुः स दुषः तति पञ्चमः ॥

Fire burns for fear of Him, the sun gives heat for fear of Him, clouds and winds move for fear of Him, death runs for fear of Him.

य आसदा बलदा यरु शिच उपासो प्रविर्ग ररु देदाः ।
ररुः पद्माश्रुतं वरु सु दुः कल्पे देदाय हविषा विरं स ॥
य प्राश्रुतो निमिस्तो माह वरु इद् राजा उगो वरुः ।
य ईशे ररुः पद्मश्रुतः ररु देदाय हविषा विरं स ॥
वस्त्रेये हिमः ररु माहत्वा ररु स्मृत् ररुता ररुता ॥
रस्त्रेमाः प्र श्रो वरु माह कल्पे देदाय हविषा विरं स ॥
येन वीरुता श्रुतिः व ररुता येन ररुः कल्पितं येन माकाः ।
यो अन्तरिक्षे ररुता निमः कल्पे देदाय हविषा विरं स ॥
यद्गुरु देदाः आसदा ररुताये आम्नं जेतो मनसा देदाय ॥
यद्गुरु सुर उदितो निमः तति कल्पे देदाय हविषा विरं स ॥
मा वो हिन्दोऽमिता यः पृथग्मा यो वा वरु स्त्रुप माः जमाना ।
यत्पापः देदाः ररुताये कल्पे देदाय हविषा विरं स ॥

He is the source of life and strength; the entire universe and the gods are ruled by Him; death and deathlessness are His shadow. To what other god shall we offer oblation?

He is the One Only King in His Own Majesty of this world of life, of these bipeds and quadrupeds. To what other god shall we offer oblation?

This snow-clad mountain, this ocean with the rivers, these are His Great Glory; the quarters of the sky, these are His Hands. To what other god shall we offer oblation?

By Him was the sky made to glow, by Him was the earth made firm, by Him was the heaven made and fixed, by Him was made the cloud moving in the air To what other god shall we offer oblation?

Him they regard steadfastly, the shining heaven and earth firmly fixed by the Supreme Energy; in Him doth the sun find his glory. To what other god shall we offer oblation?

He Whose Law is Truth, He Who created heaven and earth, He Who created the great ocean, may He preserve us from utter ruin. To what other god shall we offer oblation?

প্রারম্ভিক প্রার্থনা

হে পরম পিতা, রশ বাত্ৰ গত হইল, আমাদের তক্তিতারন পিতা তোমার মঙ্গল ইচ্ছায় ইহলোক হইতে অবস্থত হইয়াছেন। তিনি যখন যোগ-যজ্ঞায় নিতান্ত কাতর হইলেন, আমরা কিছুতেই তাঁহার শান্তি করিতে পারিলাম না, তুমি তখন আপনার অন্তর কোড়ে আশ্রয় দিয়া তাঁহাকে সকল যজ্ঞ হইতে মুক্ত করিলে। হে মঙ্গলময়, আমাদিগের জীবনদাতা তোমার প্রতি-নিবিশ্বকণ পিতা বৈষ্ণব স্নেহে আমাদিগকে প্রতিপালন করিয়াছেন, তাহা কোনো কালে পরিপোষ করা যায় না। এই সংসারসমূহে তিনি আমাদের লীলস্বরূপ ছিলেন। তিনি স্বয়ং সমুদায় বিপদের ভার বহন করিয়া আমাদিগকে রক্ষা করিতেন, পিতৃস্নেহ কীতন করিয়া শেষ করা যায় না, শিত্তকণ কিছুতেই পরিপোষ করা যায় না। অতএব আমরা সপরিবারে ভক্তিপ্রণত হইয়া তোমার নিকট এই প্রার্থনা করিতেছি যে, তাঁহার প্রতি আমাদের কৃতজ্ঞতা ও ভক্তি উন্নত করিয়া দাও। হে মুক্তিদাতা, তুমি যেমন তাঁহাকে লোকান্তরে লইয়া তাঁহার যোগ যজ্ঞায় শান্তি করিলে সেইরূপ সেখানে তাঁহাকে আপনার সহিত যুক্ত করো। তাঁহাকে সত্য-জ্যোতিতে ভূষিত করিয়া তোমার সঙ্গী করিয়া লও। তিনি যে-লোকে ধান্থন, আমাদের প্রতি প্রদত্ত ধান্থন, এবং আমরা তাঁহার নিকট হইয়া কিছু অপরাধ করিয়াছি, তাহা তিনি ক্ষমা করুন। হে মঙ্গলময়, আমরা একজন পরম বদ্ধ সকলের-কল্যাণে-নিরত মহাপুরুষকে হারাষ্টা তোমার সমুখে উপস্থিত হইয়াছি, আমাদিগকে তোমার অভয় মূর্তি প্রদর্শন করো। তিনি আমাদিগকে যে সংসারের গুরুভার অর্পণ করিয়া গেলেন, তাহা বহন করিবার সামর্থ্য প্রদান করো। এ-সংসার তোমারই প্রিয় সংসার, এখানে তোমার প্রিয় কার্য করিতে গিয়া যে-সকল ক্লেশ প্রাপ্ত হইব, তাহা যেন তোমার প্রেমে পূরিত হইয়া সখ্য করিতে পারি। স্বর্গের লোভে তোমার আজ্ঞার প্রতিফুলে আমাদের যে-সকল প্রবৃত্তি উদ্ভিত হইবে, তাহা যেন তোমার পবিত্র জ্যোতিতে ভস্মীভূত হইয়া যায়। যদি ধন, যান, বস ও প্রাণ পণ্ড পতিভাষ্য করিতে হয়, তথাপি যেন ধর্মপথ হইতে বিচলিত না হই। ধর্ম রক্ষার নিমিত্ত তুমি আমাদিগকে যে-শক্তি প্রদান করিয়াছ, অহা যেন কার্যকালে অবলম্বন করিতে প্রবৃত্তি হয়। যখন ধর্মহীনে আমাদের সমুদায় বল নিশ্চেষ্ট হইবে, তখন যেন তোমার নিকট নূতন বল প্রাপ্ত হই। তোমার প্রসাদে আমাদের এই মণ্ডলী যেন পূর্ব পুরুষদিগের লাভ-বৃত্তিসকল অচকরণ করে। হে

মঙ্গলময়, তুমি এই মণ্ডলীর সকলের মধ্যে মঙ্গল-ভাব বিস্তার করো। তোমার জ্ঞান আমাদিগকে শিক্ষা দাও, তোমার আশ্রয় প্রদান করো, এবং তোমার অক্ষর ভাণ্ডার হইতে আমাদের সকল অভাব দূর করো। তোমা হইতে আমরা যে-কিছু মঙ্গল প্রাপ্ত হই, তাহাতেই যেন সন্তোষ থাকি। তুমি যাহা কিছু দিয়াছ, যদি সকলই যায়; তথাপি তোমার মঙ্গল-স্বরূপে বিবাস যেন কখনই শিথিল না হয়। তুমি আমাদিগকে সংসারের সম্পদই প্রেরণ করো, অঙ্গর বিপদেই আশ্রয় দাও, হে মঙ্গলময়, প্রত্যেক অবস্থার পরিবর্তনে তুমি আমাদের সন্দেশে থাকিবে। তোমার দক্ষিণ মুখ তোমার প্রেম-দুটি যেন সকল সময় আমাদের দুঃখকে প্রহরণ ও উন্নত করিয়া রাখে। হে বিশ্ববিধাতা ভগবৎ পিতা, তোমার প্রসাদে বায়ু মধু বহন করিতেছে, সমুদ্র মধু ক্ষণ করিতেছে, আবার তোমারই প্রসাদে গুণবি বনস্পতিসকল মধুমান হউক, গো-সকল স্বমধুর দুগ্ধ দান করুক। রাত্রি মধু হউক, উষা মধু হউক, দ্বালোক, ভুলোক ও সূর্য মধুর হউক, পিতা তোমার মধুময় মঙ্গল ভাবের অচকরণ করুন।

THE PRAYER OF THE PERFORMER OF THE 'SRADH' CEREMONY

O Father That art Supreme, it is now ten nights since our revered father was taken away from this world in accordance with Thy gracious will. When he was sorely distressed by his illness and we could not in any way alleviate his sufferings, Thou didst take him to shelter in Thy deathless bosom, and didst free him from all pains. O Gracious Father, the love with which our father, who gave us life and who was as Thy representative here on earth, brought us up, can never be repaid within any extent of time. He was like a light to us in this sea of life. He used to protect us by bearing all the burden of troubles himself. The love of our father cannot sufficiently be expiated on, the debt due to our father cannot be repaid by any means. For that reason, we and the whole family bow down to Thee in reverent worship and pray that Thou mayst be pleased to augment our gratefulness and respect towards him. O Thou Who dost bestow final beatitude, just as Thou didst free him from all sufferings due to his illness by removing him to the other world, so also make him one With Thee there. Adorn him with the light of Truth and make him Thy companion. In whatever world he may be, may he be pleased with us, and may he forgive us all our offences committed against him. O Gracious Father, having lost a great friend who was a great man engaged in doing good to all, we have come before Thee; show us that Form of Thine which removes all fear. Give us the strength to bear the heavy burden of the worldly life which he has transmitted to us. This world is dear to Thee. May we be able to bear, thrilled by Thy love, all the sufferings we might have to undergo in fulfilling Thy dear mission. May all those desires contrary to Thy injunction which might arise in us in our longing for happiness be reduced to ashes by Thy holy fire. May we never deviate from the path of virtue even if we have to sacrifice riches, honour, fame or life itself. May we have the inclination to exercise at the proper time for action the strength which Thou hast given us for the maintenance of the Law. When the whole of our strength would be exhausted in the performance of good works, may we have new accession of strength from Thee. May this community of ours, by Thy grace, emulate the noble deeds of our ancestors. O Gracious Father, mayst Thou diffuse ideas of goodness amongst all members of this community. Teach us Thy Knowledge, give us Thy Shelter.

and from Thy inexhaustible store remove all our wants, May we be contented with whatever good we might receive from Thee. May our faith in Thy Goodness never suffer, even if we lose all that Thou hast given us. O Gracious Father, whether Thou bestowest on us riches of this world or whether Thou envelopest us in misfortunes, mayst Thou always abide with us in every change of circumstance. May Thy gracious Face and Thy Loving Glance keep our hearts gladdened and ennobled on all occasions. O Creator of the universe, Father of the world, by Thy grace the wind is wafting bliss, the sea is pouring bliss; by Thy Grace, again, may the plants and trees be full of bliss, may the cows give sweet milk; may the night be full of bliss, may the dawn be full of bliss, may

the heavens, the earth and the sun be full of bliss; and, may our father emulate Thy blissful goodness.

মন্তু খালা হুতাশনে মন্তু জ্বলন্ত সিন্ধবঃ। মাতৃদীর্ঘঃ সন্তোষধী ॥
মন্তু লক্ষ্মণতোষ সো মন্তুস্বর্গা বর্ষ বজঃ। মন্তু ঘ্রীষস্তু ন বিত্যা ॥
মন্তুনাভো বক্ষণতিমন্তুনা ঋস্তু সূর্যঃ। মাতৃদীর্ঘো মনন্তু ন ॥

The wind is wafting bliss, the oceans are pouring bliss. May the plants be full of bliss. May the night and dawn be full of bliss. May the heavens be full of bliss. May our father be full of bliss. May our trees be full of bliss. May the sun be full of bliss. May our cows be full of bliss.

THE CONCLUDING SONG

তোমার অগীমে প্রাণমন লয়ে
যত দূরে আমি ধাই—
কোথাও ছুঁখ কোথাও যুত্যা
কোথাও বিচ্ছেদ নাই।

মৃত্যু সে ধরে মৃত্যুর রূপ,
ছুঁখ হয় হে ছুঁখের রূপ,
তোমা হতে যবে হইয়ে বিমূৰ্খ
আপনার পানে চাই।

হে পূর্ণ, তব চরণের কাছে
যাহা কিছু সব আছে আছে আছে,
নাই নাই ভয় সে শুধু আমারি,
নিশিধিন কামি তাই।

অস্বপ্ন-রানি সংসার-ভার
পলক কেলিতে কোথা একাকার,
জীবনের মাঝে স্বরূপ তোমার
রাখিবারে যদি পাই।

Far as I gaze at the depth of
Thy Immensity
I find no trace there of sorrow
or death or separation.

Death assumes its aspect of
terror
And sorrow its pain
Only when, away from Thee,
I turn my face towards my
own dark self.

Thou All-Perfect, everything
abides at Thy feet
For all time.
The fear of loss only clings
to me
With its ceaseless grief,
But the shame of my penury
and my life's burden
vanish in a moment
Thy presence I feel
In the centre of my being.

ॐ ॥ শ্যান্টিঃ। শ্যান্টিঃ। শ্যান্টিঃ। ॐ ॥

শেষ কবিতা

তোমার হস্তের পথ রেখেছ আকীর্ণ করি'
বিচিত্র হলদাআলে,
হে হলদাময়ী।
নিখ্যা বিশ্বাসের ঈষৎ স্পন্দেই নিপুণ হাতে
সরল জীবনে।
এই অবকনা মিলে সহযোগে করেছ চিত্তিত;
ভার তরে রাখোনি গোপন রাহি।
তোমার জ্যোতিষ্ক তাঁরে
যে-পথ দেখায়
সে যে ভার অস্তরের পথ,
সে যে চিরবন্ধ,
সহজ বিশ্বাসে সে যে
করে ভারে চিরদুঃখল।

যাহিরে হুটল হোক অহরে সে কতু,
এই মিলে ভাষায় োরে।
লোক তোরে বলে বিড়িভিত
সত্যেরে সে পায়
আশন আলোকে বোঁদ অস্তরে অহরে।
কিছুতে পারে না তাহে অবকিতে।
যেখ পুরস্কার নিয়ে যার সে যে
আপন ভাঙারে।
অনায়াসে যে গেরেতে হলদা সহিতে
সে পায় তোমার হাতে
দান্তির অন্ধ অধিকার।

আজাদীকো, কলিকাতা
৩-শে জুলাই, ১৯৪১
সকাল ১১ ঘটিকা

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}
}

A TOTALITARIAN -

in

RELIGION

By

THE METROPOLITAN

I DESIRE to stress an aspect of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore's life which seems to be overshadowed in the minds of some by his great position as a Poet and Nationalist but I think he himself would have placed religion first as that part of his life which he held of the highest importance. He believed in God to whom all creation owed its existence. The fact that all nature was his creation made it for him an object of his closest study and attention. For, clearly it would reveal to him something of the mind and character of its Maker. This fact also led him to see that the whole creation must be a great unity and that fellowship should characterise those who dwelt in this world and not rivalry and antagonism.

HE recognised the differences which marked off nations and races,—the one from the other, but such differences should not lead to antagonism which would end in mutual destruction but to fellowship in realising together the purpose of their Creator, and by making each their own special contribution to the whole, so enriching it that it could become the real instrument of its maker's purpose. Because he thought of the whole as a great unity, he felt that all life must be dominated by the spirit.

WHILE he appreciated to the full the great gifts of many of the scholars and scientists of the West and the fine qualities which they exhibited, yet he felt that in a large measure the West was dominated by materialism. I think he was inclined to overemphasise the materialism of the West, for I know how many of the great scientists in my own country have been men of deep religious convictions, but still I am very conscious of the degree to which materialism has led many of the people of the West to allow the love of gain and power to dominate their lives and produced that great divergence in the social conditions of different classes in the West, which is a standing disgrace to civilisation.

DR. TAGORE was a totalitarian in religion. Every part of life must be controlled by the Spirit.

I would also describe him in matters of religion as eclectic. He believed that all religions contain some truth, and his aim was to appreciate and gather together the truths which they contained. This eclecticism is a characteristic of the faith which he professed, for in his early days, he was an ardent Brahmo Samajist though in later times he was somewhat disappointed with the conservatism of the Adi Samaj. The day at Santiniketan began and ended with worship in which pupils and teachers alike took their part. No one could visit that great Cultural Centre without appreciating the spiritual atmosphere which prevailed there and which owed its existence in such large measure to its founder and inspiring genius.

—Foss Calcutta

BISHOP'S HOUSE, CALCUTTA,
19th August, 1941.



APRIL
1940

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TAGORE : THE LAST PHASE

By

NIHAR RANJAN RAY

TAGORE'S emergence into maturity coincides with the birth of an integrated national consciousness in Bengal; his exit from the world that he loved so passionately touches a point in the flowing tide of time when humanity tears itself into pieces in the agony of disintegrated ideas and ideologies. Between these two points of time Bengal, the land that created him and which is also the land to which he gave form and expression, presses into history a corpus of dynamic change replete with conflicting ideas and ideals and thoughts and visions. These ideas and visions found a concrete synthesis within a wide orbit of the creative vision of one man, Tagore. Indeed, Tagore spans the last 50 years of Bengal's history with its apparently disjointed sketches integrated into one whole synthesised by a spiritual vision. At the one end of this wide expanse, lies the riverine plains of Bengal, its slowly and steadily moving rural life circumscribed by its own limited vision and tradition but enriched by her poets and artists with a romantic imagination in its healthiest sense. At its other end is the wide world, tumultuous in form and spirit, egeriously loud in its own achievements in science and industry, and proud of its conscious will. Hardly is so much given unto one man, and even if life is so kind as to favour one with such a long span of years, even then one is hardly ever competent and sensitive enough to cover in a synthetic vision such a wide vista bewildering in its endless complexity.

Tagore was cradled on the palm of a city growing under the early rays of a foreign capitalist imperialism, found maturity in the vast plains stretching on both sides of mighty rivers that water the hundreds of lowly villages of Bengal's landscape, and, when on the wrong side of 50, stepped from the limits of his own land, essentially a product of the disintegrating village social organisation and a progressive middle-class, out into the wide world that had already become the play-ground of deep and potent social forces of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Its long historical process inevitably resulted in the projection of Bengali urban middle-class life into the wide and swiftly moving currents of the outer world, while the latter borne on the shoulders of a foreign capitalist-imperialist regime flowed in hundreds of channels into the innermost depths of Bengali social economy, and it was in

Tagore's life and work that the entire historical process attained a creative synthesis unparalleled in the history of culture and literature. Not a phase, from the coarsest to the finest, not an event, from the most significant to the most lowly or subtle, ever took place in our land that did not find its reaction in some form or other within the orbit of Tagore's conception and imagination, artistic activity and expression. Indeed, he has touched and given form and expression to all phases and aspects of our deeper social existence, of our life in its widest and deepest sense. Out of the mud and silt of the Padma and the Bhagirathi he moulded into a significant form what we know today as modern Bengal. If he was our creation, we are his creations as well—his majestic figure forms the entire background of all that is abiding and significant in Bengali life of today and yesterday. Eighty long years took him through all phases and all stages of Bengal's creative life as seen against the world's social forces. In his works more than in anything else, they are reflected to their full; one stage gradually merges into the next, sometimes anticipating the latter, sometimes continuing the past through the next. His creative life has been a life of eternal flux, and since it was so, the sum total of his creative activities has a dynamic character, a progressive quality that are often missed when they are read or viewed by bits.

II

THIS dynamic and progressive quality in a truly creative sense had ever been a characteristic feature of Tagore's imagination and expression. He had always been a passenger in the chariot of Time. His earlier works and his works of maturity as well are all tuned to the eternal movement of time charged with a depth that often screens the movements on the surface, but it is present as potently in the "Prabhat Sangit" as it is in "Balaka" or "Purabi" or even "Mahua", as potently in the short stories, as in his symbolical

dramas and novels of urban life—sometimes conceived romantically sometimes idealistically but never far removed from the inner realities of life of the people they deal with. But it was left to his mature years, indeed after he was 70, to impart into this sense of reality the background of a historical consciousness. He had been always a liberated spirit, always free from prejudice, at the same time always disciplined by a conception of life that sought synthesis between matter and spirit. But he had to wait till the declining years of life for the complete liberation of his intellect, for attaining a true detachment that gives a clear vision into the intricate process through which the world and humanity moves from progress to progress. In fact, the last ten years of life open a new phase of creative activity, new but not inherently unconnected from his earlier phases; indeed, the last phase crowns the earlier phases with a final efflorescence which can be historically interpreted as the fulfilment of a logical process.

A few facts are significant. In 1930 Tagore visited the U. S. S. R., at a time when the world including his country was in the midst of a grave economic depression with the consequent evils heaped on humanity at large. In 1931 the reactions to his visit were published in the form of "Russiar Chithi" or Letters from Russia. This was also the year, it must be remembered, that witnessed the disintegration of the second Civil Disobedience movement followed by imperialist repression and undermining of civil liberties all over India. Against the background of the recent Soviet visit conditions nearer home presented a spectacle gloomier than ever, and coupled with this were the effects of economic depression growing more and more acute. In 1936 and, again in 1937, the Indian National Congress was presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru, and from the platforms of Lucknow and Fyzabad he beacons the country to the call of a new age whose soft whispers were already being heard from all corners of India. But at the same time due to more causes than one all progressive struggles and movements for social justice and equality were being faced with stubborn official and, I shall say, also non-official resistance. Unorganised and confused, the progressive elements themselves were frittering their strength away more in shouts and slogans than in any

effective action or expression. Abroad, in 1932 greedy Japan preyed upon historic but struggling China, in 1935 came Fascist Italy's murderous attack upon the dark and weak Abyssinia, and in 1936 the German and Italian Fascisms started their attack upon the Republican Spain. All over Europe and the Western world standards of political and economic morality speedily dropped down to an incredibly low ebb and released forces that sought to strangle humanity's voice. Man, the one love of the poet, was everywhere in chains, humanity which had been his only altar of worship was everywhere in desecration, till finally, in 1939, the destiny of man and the future of humanity were cast into the whirl of death and destruction. Posed against the background of this world-scene was the ever-present consciousness in the poet's mind that he was ageing and the sound of the slow but sure foot-steps of Death were reaching his ears from beyond the estuary of life. In 1931 the poet was already 70 and the country had royally celebrated his septuagenary. Towards the end of 1937 he was suddenly taken seriously ill, but recovered after a strenuous fight. Again, towards the end of 1940, the deadly grapple with death began and the fight went on till he finally succumbed. Death thus was coming not only to his own physical existence, but death with its destructive army was also on the march towards a phase of social organisation all over the world that had developed a culture and civilisation which the poet was proud to claim as his own, but which at the same time, the poet was fully conscious, fondled in its bosom the germs of decay and death.

This then was the state of men and things whose waves constantly bounded on the shores of his mind and imagination, and the reactions in the depths of his creative soul are reflected in the works of the last ten years. To read these works is to know in a sensitive soul the intricate process that took shape in the laboratory of the poet's mind. If this form and shape is of a highly monadic character, brought into being in a pronouncedly individualised expression, it is equally a collective expression of the social mind of the last ten years.

The reactions are clear. He had lived through three generations; he has seen everything, known everything, seen and known through a poet's mind and imagination that do not miss anything, from the most beautiful to the most sordid, from the most sublime to the most ridiculous. He witnessed the downfall and destruction of every noble thing he stood for in life, all the great

hopes he cherished for humanity were being pulled to the dust. There was nothing to be proud of, nothing to hope for. The picture of the days that were gone was one of utter and abject humiliation. In his own unfortunate country it was a mournful spectacle that hardly left anything but for grief and lament. But did he lament? Was he lost in the delirious grief, did he lose faith in humanity? Did he cease to love men? No, not at all. He was no pessimist, no cynic,—never. He stood at death's door transcending all earthly desires, with a mature serenity and tranquillity of soul that pierced through the inner meaning of men and knew the world of humanity that had revealed to him through a life of long experience its intrinsic values. He was drawing near to death, he was fully prepared for the last ferry, but he was never eager to go, to leave the world that he loved so dearly, to bid adieu to man in whom he found the solace of his soul. He did not want to go, he would rather cling to life than hand himself over to death. He, therefore, never loses faith in humanity, in his own people, in the people of the world. Death and destruction cannot be the destiny of the Eternal Man, the man that toils and works, the man who clings to earth and nature, the Common Man. And humanity never dies, the humanity that is the creation of the social will.

Tagore gave his heart to things and things in return revealed their hearts, their inner meaning to him, the inner meaning understood historically. Not without reason, again and again, he turns to them alone and not to the great figures of history who are supposed to have made and unmade, built and unbuild countries and empires; and because he trusts the common man, trusts and loves humanity, he has faith in youth, in the path-finders, in the eternal wayfarers, in the tillers of the soil, in the toilers of the world. Indeed he has undying, unswerving faith in the inexhaustible strength of the common man, the eternal source of youth and progress.

Cynicism and conservatism grow with age, but with Rabindranath the reverse has been true. This has been so because he had always been a lover of men and nature in their widest and deepest connotation. The phase of culture and civilisation which he had lived through was approaching death and destruction, this he was fully conscious of, fully knew all its implications. That would have been enough to shatter even a superior mortal, but Tagore 'had attained' to that historical consciousness which taught him that death and destruction of a particular

phase is but a pause in the eternal march of humanity, a travail of the birth of a new phase of civilisation and culture. Death and destruction come as a natural process whenever they carry decaying and devaluing germs within them and it is man unto whom is given the right and strength to give new expressions to their inner will after a newer vision. Why should Rabindranath then lose faith in humanity, why should he become cynic or pessimist? Or why should he be conservative? Unattached, unburdened, unafraid and purged of all prejudices—prejudices are born of the want of complete understanding of man—Tagore, himself a liberated spirit, came to believe in the liberated spirit of man. It was a deeper consciousness of history, of man and the surrounding universe that gave him an insight in his mature years into the eternal quest of man through conflicts and contradictions, through strifes and struggles. Read his *Tin Sangi*, and you will know that no modern writer can beat him in modernity.

During the last ten years of life Tagore was growing more and more secular in the innermost depths of his existence. He had no doubt a never-failing consciousness of the presence of an omnipotent Lord of the universe, that is unmistakable in his works, but notwithstanding, the writings of his last phase reveal more than anything else the consciousness, the omnipotent consciousness of Man the divine, of humanity enthroned by the side of the Lord of the universe. The more he approaches death the more worldly he becomes, the more he loves man, the more he drinks into the fountain of life. It is not without reason he questions his Master if He has loved those who are the instruments of tyranny and oppression of the lowliest and the low, questions the justice of the continued existence of the present social organisation that desecrates humanity. This total attitude of the mind then is at the background of the last phase of Tagore's creative genius.

III

I HAVE already hinted that the early dawning of this mental attitude, in other words, of this historical consciousness dates roughly from about 1930, from the reactions to his Russian visit. It is already noticeable in *Russian Chhithi* (1931) so well-known to us, but it is still in a discursive stage, in a stage where the first perception has just stirred the intellect. The first signs of an emotional expression of this attitude come to view in *Parishesh* (1932), but it is not until *Prantik* (1937) when

নমো যত্ন, নমো যত্ন, নমো যত্ন ।

তব লৌহ গলিত শৈল দলিত অচল চলিত মত্ত ॥

বড় কাষ্ঠ-লোষ্ট-ইষ্টক-দূঢ় ধন-পিতৃক কায়া,

বড় ভুল জল অতরীক্ষ-লঙ্ঘন লধু গায়া,

তব শ্রুতি শ্রুতিগ্র নথ বিদীর্ঘ ক্ষিতি বিদীর্ঘ অন্ধ

তব অশ্রুত-বক্রত বর ইন্দ্রজাল তত্ত্ব ॥

বরেন্দ্র নাথ ঠাকুর



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during the serious illness of that year that the new consciousness becomes an integral part of his emotional being. But before I take my readers through those evidences that reveal a direct expression of this deeper historical consciousness it is necessary to introduce them within the limited space available to some important characteristics evident in the works of the last phase that are also none-the-less expressive of a deeper and more integrated knowledge of life and reality than hitherto experienced.

Of these characteristics, the first and the foremost is the idea of death that comes recurrently to the poet. We all know how the poet from his early youth so dallied with death that he lost all fear of it, but death did not reveal all its grandeur and majesty until the poet himself was drawn closer to it and made to stand face to face. Death's slowly approaching presence wrought an intricate process in the poet's mind and imagination that revealed not only the inner meaning of death but also the inner meaning of life itself. Again and again in dozens of poems he comes back to this idea till he takes the deep purificatory plunge in the illness of 1937. He comes out of it fully cleansed, fully purified, indeed this continuous bath, in the transparent waters of death meant for the poet a process of the purification of his soul. The sublime pieces in *Prantik* are evidence on the point. It was the illness of 1940 that gave him a taste of death that finally made him fix his gaze on the 'eternal light that is spaceless and timeless'. From the purificatory fire of physical pain he emerged a fuller man, stronger, more unattached, more unburdened, and endowed with a clearer vision that was deep and transparent. Dozens of pieces can be cited on this point: they are strewn all over *Roga-sajaya*, *Arogya* and *Janmadine*. These poems reveal that he was fully prepared for the final plunge but he was never eager for it. Everything had been done, every large or small duty had been performed, everything that life and nature had spread out to him was fully enjoyed and experienced and transformed into a light that never was on sea or land, he was now prepared to go, but life in the meanwhile had been enriched by a newer vision, a newer meaning and a newer perspective. He had yet more to know, to drink deeper into the fountain of life. He therefore does not feel inclined to leave, again and again he comes back to man, the eternal source of life. In all such pieces, specially those written during the prolonged illness of 1940 and after, one can hear a deep and sombre voice, witness a deeper vision of

life and death and of creation and destruction that had rendered the poet's creative life luminously transparent. All that he says is precise, straight and simple. The transparency and strength of a purified and unattached mind have imparted to all such pieces a compact solidity, not only of expression but also of inner meaning, glow in faith and love. They have also imparted a soft sweetness radiating from deep and endless love of men from the satisfaction born of love and service received from his fellow men. Indeed he is all full of thanks and gratitude for everything around, for everything that men and the world presented before him.

This strong, deep and transparent attitude of mind also naturally revealed unto him a deeper wisdom which we call *prajna* and which is but another word for a deeper insight into the real meaning of life and death. This deeper insight leads him up to deeper faith in the Master of life as well,—that is unmistakable in his writings—but more significant is the fact that he gains a deeper faith in the eternal and universal Man also and reads a deeper meaning in the flowing current of humanity which we call history. It is the deeper faith in the endlessness of creation, deeper faith in man, deeper faith in the inherent strength of life, deeper faith in the *sadhana* of the human soul, deeper faith in peace and love, it is this deeper more abiding and all-pervading Faith that permeates scores of pieces written after the illness of 1937 and specially after that of 1940.

IV

I have said he was fully prepared for the last ferry but he was never eager to go. Unattached he clung to life as fondly as he had never done before. Again and again in scores of pieces he comes back to life, not to life where it is most loud and big and great in the ordinary sense, rather to life's trivialities to those shadowed and subdued corners screened from vulgar turmoil but not away from toil and strife from pain and suffering. Scores of scenes from the daily life and experiences of the common man—the toiler in the mill, the tiller of the soil, the common girl, the college student, the clerk, the cowboy, the Santal maiden, the hillman of Mangpu, the charwoman, the domestic servant, the coolie, the rickshaw-puller, and so on—, countless scenes that reveal the tyranny and injustice of existing socio-economic order crowd in almost all the works of the poet's last phase, as they do in so many of the earlier works also, for example, in *Pakalaka*. These are all born no doubt of a full social awareness, not always

conceived romantically, but from *Navayataka* onwards this social awareness is endowed with a deeper historical consciousness as well. These scenes and episodes are sometimes derived from the mind's eye, sometimes they are brought back to life from old memories and sweetest are those written during and after the illness of 1937, when the poet was in a reminiscent mood. A soft sweetness coupled with a virile and compact expression, a deep repose and dignity even when he is in lighter vein and an all-embracing love pervades all such pieces. But in both cases he seems to enjoy a newer and deeper taste of life born of a deeper faith in humanity, he seems to be full of the joy of direct and immediate experience of reality.

This direct and immediate experience of reality is but a step short of the dawning of historical consciousness. I have already said that this dawning is first noticeable in *Parisesh* where in several pieces he reveals his consciousness of the new light, the new joy. I am referring to pieces like 'Agantuk.' And once this consciousness is there the first question inevitably makes its appearance. The idea at the root of the pieces like *Prasna* in *Parisesh* strikes at the very foundation of the existing social order and prepares the ground for the flowering of the historical consciousness. But as I said it was still in a discursive stage and not an integral part of the poet's emotional life. Closely following on the heels of *Parisesh* the new flowering bursts forth in a dramatic-lyrical expression in *Rather Rasi* incorporated in *Kaler Jatra*. I draw particular attention of readers of *Rabin-dranath* to this short dramatic piece, which is indeed the first manifesto of the common man so far as our country and Bengali literature are concerned. But even the historical consciousness is not as yet fully integrated.

Deeper studies in life viewed as historical reality engages the poet in *Punascha* in which at least two pieces are significant from this point of view, one is 'Manavaputra' where again the tune of the 'Question' in *Parisesh* reappears, but more sublime is *Sisu-Tirtha* which, for the first time, gives almost an uncanny historical study of the eternal march of man to the goal of eternal birth, the refrain is significant: "Glory to Man, glory to the Newly-born, glory to the Eternally Living." The deeper study continues through *Vichitra* (1933), and *Sesh Saptak* (1935), where, again, in number 43, he reaches to a meaning of history studied through the long course of his own life. Equally significant are several other pieces, notably numbers 20, 21 and 30. In *Patraput* (1936), the dawning of the

new life seems to take a definite shape and the surging consciousness eager for expression bursts forth in half-a-dozen pieces, notably in numbers 3, 12 and 15. The process continues through *Syamali*, which is equally significant as *Patraput*; particularly significant are pieces like 'Chirajatri', 'Milbhanga', 'Amrita' and 'Syamali'.

The Poet now reaches a stage where he subjects the experience of the new consciousness so far gained into an intellectual analysis that finds expression in *Kalantar* (1937) a collection of socio-political essays. The serious illness of 1937 brings him face to face with death which helps him to integrate the entire experience gained so far. From the sun-set bed spread on the shores of the last-crossing he sent out his call directed towards the eastern horizon. He wrote 18 short pieces 16 of which express his deepest emotions about life and death, but the last two reveal that underlying everything and enveloping everything was the ever-present consciousness of a deeper vision. In number 17, he frankly confesses that 'the day he came back from death's grapple to his real self he awoke to the consciousness of the burning cauldron that was the civilisation of today and into this cauldron were being thrown scraps of helpless humanity'. The last piece rises almost to the pitch: 'serpents are breathing deadly venom all-around, and soft, sonorous words of peace sounds as if they were useless mockery. Before I go, therefore, I send out my call to those who are preparing themselves everyday for the great struggle with the demons of destruction'.

Senjati (1938) carries on the refrain though in a subdued tone, but it nevertheless continues the process of deeper study which is equally evident even in the lighter pieces of *Akas-Pradip* (1939). The early years of 1940 brought forth *Navajataka*, the Newly-born. The title is significant; it is not only frank in the admission of the integrated historical consciousness which is explicitly stated in the poet's preface, all the pieces moreover, whether descriptive, reflective or narrative, are permeated with an intellectuality that is unmistakable. Unmistakable also is the attitude of mind that loves to dive deep into the inner meaning of life and reality, into the inner process of history. Particularly remarkable from these points of view are the pieces titled '*Prayashchitta*', '*Hindusthan*', '*Rajputana*', '*Bhumi kampa*', '*Pakshimanav*', '*Ahavan*', '*Epare-Opere*', '*Romantic*', '*Ratri*', and '*Rup-Birup*'.

Sanai (1940) follows closely on the heels of *Navajataka*. Some of the pieces in *Sanai* are intensely lyrical, reminiscent of lighter experiences, some are frankly narrative. A couple of pieces are important but not very significant. In the triad composed by *Rogasajyaya* (1940), *Arogya* and *Janmadine* (1941) there is further deepening of this historical consciousness, of that of life and death, of direct and immediate experience of reality which I have already referred to above. The last illness gave him renewed strength and deeper faith in the new consciousness. This is not only revealed in the pieces that speak of death and life, in those that speak of the 'honeyed universe and honeyed dust of the earth', but sing also of the

eternal man and his historical destiny. Particularly significant are several pieces in *Arogya* and *Janmadine*, as for example, numbers 1, 3, 4, 7, 10 and 18 in *Arogya*, and numbers 5, 10, 12, 17, 18 and 21 in *Janmadine*.

Social awareness was always a characteristic of Tagore as reflected in his short stories and novels, but even as late as *Sesher Kavita* and *Yogayoga*, his attitude was one of compromise, best illustrated in the character of Binodini in *Chokher Bali*, in the birth-mystery of Gora in *Gora*, in the attitude of Amit and Yogamaya in *Sesher Kavita*, as also in the return of Kumu in *Yogayoga*. But as he approaches final maturity his social awareness achieves a historical consciousness which purges his intellect of prejudices, he leaves behind the attitude of compromise, understands the historical meaning of things and events, and stares reality in the face. This new attitude reveals itself stage by stage in *Dui bon* (1933) and *Malancha* (1934), shows a slight slackening in *Char-adhyaya* (1934) but, at the final stage, takes a revolutionary turn in *Tin Sangi*. The demand of man, of humanity free from outworn traditions and prejudices is the only claim that he came to recognise, humanity freed from social and economic serfdom, men free from all kinds of tutelage is the ideal he came to stand for. To that claim and to that ideal Tagore brought the offerings of the last ten years of his life crowned finally by the thundering voice that frowned grimly on those who are the enemies of the Eternal Man. The sentinel is gone but his grim warning yet abides in. "Crisis in Civilization".

..আমার কবিতা জানি আমি

বেলেও বিচিত্র পথে হয় নাই সে সর্বত্রপালী।

তুরাগের ঝীনের শরিক যে-জন,

কর্ম ও কথার সত্য আঞ্জীত করছে মর্জন,

যে আছে হাতির কাছাকাছি

সে কবির বাগি লাগি কান পেতে আছে।

সাহিত্যের আনন্দের ডোহে

নিজে যা পারি না দিতে নিত্য আমি থাকি তারি বোঁধে।

সেটা সত্য হোক

গুরু ভক্তি গিরে যেন না ভোলায় চোখ।

সত্য মূল্য না দিয়েই সাহিত্যের ব্যাতি করা চুরি

ভালো নয়, ভালো নয় একই সে শৌখিন বহুহুরি।

এসো কবি, অব্যাতকলনের

নিখাৎ হনের।

মর্যে বেদনা বত করিহো উদ্ধার

প্রাণহীন এ দেশেতে পা-হীন বেধা চারিবার

অবজার ভাষে শুক দিয়ানব সেই বহুস্থি

রসে পূর্ণ কবি দাঁড় তুমি।

অন্তরে যে উত্তম তার আছে আশনারি

তাই তুমি দাঁড় তো উদ্ধারি।

সাহিত্যের ঐকতর সংগীতসভার

একতার্য বাহাদের তাল্লাও শব্দান যেন পায়,

কুক বাহা হুগে তগে

নতশির শুক বারা বিবের সমুখে।

ওগো গুণি,

কহে থেকে দূরে বারা ভাষারের বাগি যেন গুনি।

তুমি থাকো তাহাদের জাতি

তোবার ব্যাতিতে তারা পার যেন আপনারি ব্যাতি-

আমি বাহংগার

তোমারে করিব নবদ্বার।

উদয়ন

২১ জানুয়ারি, ১৯৪১

মকাম

—“জয়দেব”—

২৪শ বৈশাখ, ১৩৪৭

In Silent

ADORATION

By

NIRMAL KUMAR SIDDHANTIA

TRIBUTES to great poets usually refer to their precocity, versatility, extensive survey of life, intensive study of humanity, width or vision and penetration of insight. These specimens of the jargon of criticism are properly to be condemned and yet at moments one feels that one cannot do without them for the conventional may cease to be a convention and become the sincerest expression of the heart. Homage to a poet whose works have become part of one's life and whose personality has been adored to the verge of worship,—homage to such a spirit is seriously handicapped as it has to depend on the same circumscribed medium as is utilised by the callous professional reviewer for recording his points of superficial study and incomplete examination. Conscious of these handicaps one proceeds with diffidence to pay this tribute to our "mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies" who has proceeded to his eternal rest after a full life of creative activity which is difficult to parallel in the history of any literature.

Rabindranath started his literary career at the age of 14 or 15 with poems like *Wild Flowers* and *Lamentation*. The most noteworthy works of these early years were the lyrics published under the pseudonym of Bhrunusinha and represented as the work of a mediæval Vaisnava poet. The background of this early poetry was supplied partly by the atmosphere of the home of which the presiding deities were his saintly father and eldest brother partly by the landscape of the lower Bengal with its profusion of luxurious vegetation and partly by the desultory study of the early literature of religious and secular love. We have been told about his lack of University education and his just disparagement of what passes under that name in this country, but we should not forget the learning evident even in some of the earliest prose of his youth, in his articles on *Anglo-Saxon Literature*, on *Petrarch and Laura*, on *Dante*, *Goethe* and *Chatterton*, written when he was barely 17. In later years he spoke with pleasure of what he had gained from the lectures of Henry Morley at University College, London,—especially from his lectures on *Shakespeare* and *Sir Thomas Browne*.

QUITE early he evinced his predilection for expression in the dramatic as well as in the lyric form and the earliest examples of the former are *Rudrachanda* and *Bhagnahradya* written before he was 20, while the first manifestations of his greatness as a

lyrist are to be found in the *Evening Songs* and *Morning Songs* written two or three years later. Thus while we admire his precociousness we have at the same time to think of that long period of creative activity that few poets have been blest with. With Wordsworth excess of longevity was a curse and many admirers of Wordsworth have wished that he had exercised greater restraint on his imagination during the last 31 years of his life, but none will make such a statement about Rabindranath. From 1878 to 1941 he has continuously worked at full pressure and though we may not enjoy all his works but have a note flagging of inspiration on occasions we cannot trace the growth of his genius only up to a certain point but have to discover the peaks scattered all over those sixty years.

Nor can we forget the versatility of his genius. In the sphere of drama he has written sentimental tragedies, serious plays with genuine pathos, problem plays with definite messages, symbolic dramas, social comedies and enjoyable farces. He has used as his media verse (rhymed and unrhymed), rhythmic prose and the common medium of our daily conversation. It is difficult to say in which of these he excelled more than in others. Readers of his plays a hundred years hence may doubt the suitability of some of these for representation on the stage, but such an idea will never be tolerated by those of us who had the privilege of seeing them staged under his supervision with himself in a leading role inspiring the rest of the cast with vitality. *Dakghar* and *Achalayatan* (*The Post-office* and *The Home of Conservation*) have less action than most of his dramas, yet the stage-representation of these thrilled the spectators with a sense of reality which one does not ordinarily get from the theatre. It is a pity that it has not been possible to preserve in a permanent form his own acting as also that of Gaganendranath, Abanindranath and others who presented *Baikunther Khata*, *Dakghar* and the other plays in private performances in the early years of the century.

RABINDRANATH started his real career as a novelist with his *Eye-sore* in 1903, a story to which justice has not been done by his critics who have not yet fully appreciated the psychological presentation of the heroine, one of the

first live women of modern Indian fiction. The greatness of *Govdā* written a few years later was responsible for renewed interest in and popularity of his early novels, but he has achieved fresh heights with his later studies of men and women in prose fiction where he has shown his close observation and deep understanding of the life of Bengal in all its phases during the last forty years. The historian trying to reconstruct the life of these decades from a distance of two or three centuries will not find more valuable materials any where else in the mass of prose fiction which is threatening to swamp all other branches of literature in modern Bengal.

IT is a truism that a great novelist does not usually find the short story a satisfactory medium, but Rabindranath if he has developed the Bengali novel in its adolescence may be said to have created the short story in modern Indian literature. The infinite variety of these stories may only be referred to in passing: these are comedies, tragedies, fantasies, parables. Some are short novels, others long short stories, some merely note a critical situation in the lives of certain individuals while others study a group over a considerable period of time, introducing more than one generation within their purview. It is the short story which has been responsible for the extension and consolidation of Periodicals in modern Bengal and Rabindranath in creating the Bengali short story and in establishing one of the earliest periodicals. Reviews may be regarded as one of the Fathers of this type of literature.

MULTIFARIOUS as his achievements are, this tribute to his memory must base its homage primarily on his lyrical genius and on his qualities as a melodious singer of the joys and sorrows of man. He saw life steadily and interpreted it as few in the West have succeeded in the present age. We who are diffident in expression of personal opinions have recourse to the testimony of A. C. Bradley and W. B. Yeats on their first introduction to his works through the agency of Rothstein, but at a moment like this we may pluck up courage, boldly place him on the height of Olympus to which he belongs and bow our heads in silent adoration.

—Courtesy All India Radio, Lucknow

TAGOR

THE IMMORTAL

WITH the death of Rabindranath, has closed one of the world's most superb and unchallenged literary dictatorships that civilisation has ever known. The Age of Pericles was brilliant but short lived. Vergil's literary efflorescence was dimmed by the lustre of the Roman State. Shakespeare's supremacy of genius in Elizabethan England was the sovran expression of his nation's freedom and expansion of wings, but even his primacy of place was challenged by lesser lights in drama and poetry. The age of Tennyson was the one parallel we can think of in connection with Tagore's work ; it was long enough to challenge comparison, but the literary throne of England, even in the height of Tennyson's power, was disputed by the rugged vehemence of Browning and the artistic brilliance of the pre-Raphaelites. Tagore's work is even more remarkable : because it succeeded supremely, without any adventitious aids ; in spite of the mournful setting of his country's political servitude, he lifted his literature out of the rut of a provincial dialect to its place in the sun as one of the world's most gifted literatures. And he did this as its unchallenged master. With his definite emergence as a world poet, all his contemporaries, worthy as they were, shrank into insignificance. Nabin Chandra, Bihārīlal, who as lyrist was Tagore's exemplar, Rajani Kānta, Satyen Dutt, Akshay Baral—all with remarkable achievements to their credit—receded in the starry line and gave way to this new luminary of art and song. Even the new rebels who in the evening of Tagore's career, broke away from his enchanting spell and sought new bearings, began their work always by reverent invocation to him as their *Kavīguru*.

Tagore's astonishing output is part of the basis of this literary sovereignty. From about the age of fifteen, up till a week before his death, he had been writing incessantly. One would have thought that this literary fecundity would be fatal to a poet's reputation, but the astonishing thing about Tagore is that it not only was not so, but on the other hand it flowered and fruited in a thousand ways, in an immense variety of form and theme. In Poetry he was sovereign master, but he touched excellence in many other forms. Drama, short story, novel, prose-poem, blank verse—even pedestrian prose—he tried and gave to each, new values in art and lyricism, new ways of rhythm and sonance—myriad shapes of beauty and colour and form. Tagore's work is a whole literature by itself. It cannot yet be computed how much he has actually written, but even if the estimate be rated at three hundred thousand lines of verse (apart from his prose), he can be easily adjudged as the world's most prolific poet. Even the great epics of India with their legendary magni-

By

SATYA VRATA MUKERJEA

ficence of song do not attain this output. Homer and Vergil do not stand comparison,—the works of Dante, Shakespeare and Milton all are meagre in volume.

An output like this cannot obviously be equal in quality, but even the bitterest Tagore-detractors—and he had so many in his life-time—grim pandits of the stiff old tradition who had the impertinence of quoting from his works and asking examinees in the Calcutta University to “rewrite them in chaste Bengali”—even they could not dare reject—as he himself so frankly and freely did—his juvenilia as trash. *Māyār Khelā*, one of his earliest musical plays was instinct with the lyric revelry of song. His literary *tour de force*—*Bhānu Sinher Padābali*—one of his childhood's forgeries—bore the stamp of genius. His other earlier productions, although they were marked by a twilight of expression and were filled with “phantasmal doubts and leaden-eyed despairs”, showing that his soul was yet not out of the woods of the mind (his *Hriday-aranya*)—created for themselves a new quality, as yet undiscovered, in Bengali literature. Even in his period of decline, which definitely set in about 1925 and after, he produced two superb volumes of verse—*Mahā* and *Purabi* : a great play, *Muktadhārā* which was his eloquent protest against the onslaught of machinery on the ancient ramparts of man's individual freedom, his greatest novel—*Jogajog*, and his brilliant letters from Russia—*Rushiyā Chithi*—which form a penetrating study of the Soviet experiment—also belong to this period. And, most astonishing thing of all, his last two years before his death were a great creative period—as if his spirit flared up for a final adieu. His *Prantik*—“From Life's Frontier”, his *Rog Shajiyae*—“On the bed of Sickness”—and *Arogya*—“Back to Health”—were his last proud manifestoes against sorrow and pain, to succumb to which was to him spiritual death. Here was his Testament of his abiding love for all life's “richness, ripeness, ratheness”.

AND yet with all this, Tagore was no flash in the pan of Bengal's intellect. He was the climax and the crown of a long and honoured poetical tradition. Love of Nature and God was all along the most distinctive quality of the Bengali lyric from the earliest ages. It not only manifested itself in the intimate passion of Vaishnava romanticists, from Chandidas and Vidyapati onwards, but also formed the core of the enraptured muse of Śākta poets like

Ramprasad whose exaltation of the motherhood of power had its roots deep in the wonderland of Bengal's landscape. From the studied classicism of the cloister where pandits intoned their age-long dreams, to the folk music of the fields and the market place, Tagore collected material for his muse and blended them with the majestic store-house of Sanskrit song. He was also the inheritor of the Persi Arabic culture which for well nigh six centuries had pulsed and moulded the life of mediaeval Bengal. Here the blue domes of Ispahan with their magic moonlights of unceasing dalliance mingled with the hard glitter of Arabia's league upon league of echoing sand. Finally came Europe with its multitude of influences, pouring into his soul, like the waters of the open sea. It may be that Tagore, like others of his contemporaries, at first preferred the heady wine of Europe to the more steady and nourishing food of her finer and wiser tradition. But whatever touched him, whether it was the turbid violence of Byron or the magic of Keats, the rapture of Shelleyan song or the inchoate vehemence of Browning or the loveliness of lilt of the pre-Raphaelites, he had chastened all his Western borrowings in the austere crucible of his Eastern discipline.

Tagore was brought up in the midst of this complex of influences. It was an advantage, in the great old house that he was brought up in, that he imbibed all these and was allowed to do so freely. After a futile early effort at schooling, which in later life he remembered always with disgust, he learnt to look on, forward and backward, and all ways, intimately, closely, reverently. He loved nature in its most intimate moods, but he never retired to its solitudes, unless it be for gathering strength to come back for work and effort and reform. He loved mankind even more than nature—he loved this earth with its myriad lights and shadows, and plainly preferred it to the cold flawless purity of Heaven's pathways. He brought Nature and man most closely together and read in each other's ways always some lovely analogues. All the fury of nature's tempests was limned for him in a mist of tenderness. The grandeur and the tumult of the Ocean's waves had for him the heaving tenderness of a mother's love. Thus the primeval Sea was to him the World's First Mother.

BUT apart from these reactions to Nature, Tagore derived from his cosmopolitan upbringing a richness of community-life which he utilised to the full for the benefit of his country's literature. He brought to the service of his Muse all the varied currents of the world's experiences and rescued his own language, from what had hitherto been its most destructive blight, its maddening monotony of theme. It is the fate of some peoples that they may have richness of experience but that their tongues are dumb. It was the fate of Bengal, however, before Tagore came to rule in her literary firmament, that she could express herself, and do it well, but that she had little to express. Tagore gave to Bengal

A LETTER FROM PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

DISTRICT JAIL, DEHRADUN,
August 18, 1941.

Passed by Censor

My dear Amal,

Sometime back I received your "Tagore Birthday Special Supplement" and I appreciated it very much. It was a fine production. Now your second letter has arrived asking me to send contributions for "Tagore Memorial Number". I am afraid that you do not realise that a person confined in prison has to live within all manner of limitations and restrictions. Anyway I am not supposed to send contributions to papers or magazines for publication. Even if there were no such bar, I would hesitate to do so from prison, for I cannot write within the narrow ambit of numerous censorship. So I cannot send you anything.

My mind goes back to nearly ten years ago when I was in this very jail and you wrote to me for a message for the "Golden Book of Tagore". I sent you then a few lines. A few lines, or many lines, of formal appreciation or sorrow now would almost be an impertinence to the memory of Gurudev. When the time comes, I suppose I shall write about him.

Yours sincerely,

Jawaharlal Nehru

SHRI AMAL HOME,
Editor, Calcutta Municipal Gazette,
Calcutta.

The message Pandit Nehru had sent to the "Golden Book of Tagore" is given below:—

"For those who have grown up in the Tagore tradition in India it is a little difficult to measure the great influence it has exercised on them and on the country. I cannot venture to do so. But I wish to pay my deep homage to one who has been as a beacon light to all of us, ever pointing to the finer and nobler aspects of life and never allowing us to fall into the ruts which kill individuals as well as nations. Nationalism, specially when it urges us to fight for freedom, is noble and life-giving. But often it becomes a narrow creed, and limits and encompasses its votaries and makes them forget the many-sidedness of life. But Rabindranath Tagore has given to our nationalism the outlook of internationalism and has enriched it with art and music and magic of his words, so that it has become the full-blooded emblem of India's awakened spirit."

wondrous variety, and endowed her with matchless lyrical resources. Her care-worn song was born in the house of sorrow,—Tagore brought to it flashes of inspiration and joy.

And not only this: Tagore has spanned for India the ages with his song. Very few other poets have been able to do this: Goethe did this for modern Europe: he brought the chivalry and heroism of the Teuton peoples from out of the mists of legend and fable, chastened them through contact with Christian purity and classic poise, and brought to the modern spirit a grateful sense of the continuity of its cultural heritage. And the poet who does this, deserves well of civilisation. We speak glibly of the East and the West and the supposed fundamental differences between them. But these are nothing to the real chasm that exists between the ancient and the modern temper. That is the true divide of culture—the contrasted attitudes of the ancient and the modern peoples of the earth, to life itself and to methods of approach towards its problems. What was the ancient attitude towards man and society? Its antique religion was characterised by intimate comradeship between God and man. The pristine contents of its simple life pulsed with blitheness and repose. There was consecration and recollectedness—a perfect poise between thought and expression. The ancient mind, like the ancient State, was limited and close-knit: according to Aristotle's canon, bounded by 'the limitation of human vision and of human memory'. Thus the individual was important and his personality unfolded itself unfettered and supreme.

The temper of the modern world is associated with the vastness of its organisation, the boundlessness of its collective freedom, and the almost limit-

less possibilities of its opportunity. Here was a new joy in being: a rebirth of the Spirit of Wonder.

But the chief difference lay in the characteristic mental make-up of the two worlds. Pater in his *Plato and Platonism* has set out this contrast in words that will live for all time: "The scepticism of the modern world, beset now with insane speculative figments, has been an appeal from the preconceptions of the understanding to the authority of the senses." "With the Greeks", as we may say for all ancient peoples generally, "whose metaphysical business was then all to do, the sceptical action of the mind lay rather in the direction of an appeal from the affirmations of sense to the authority of newly awakened reason". It is thus that the idealist reaction against Science in the present age is due to the recoil of the spirit from the shackles of well-established Reason.

It was for Tagore to adjust for his race and civilisation the conflicting claims of Science-grounded Reason on the one hand and of Ideality and Passion on the other. In his religion, he reproduced the comradeship and intimacy of the Vedic attitude—in his conception of his *Jivan Devata* as *Sakhā* or friend. His poetry represents the union of the Romantic spirit with its high adventure, its variety, its nostalgia for unfollowed ways, its thrills of whelming passion, its storms and thunders, with the classic austerity of outline of the antique life, the epic grace and poise, the serenity of its idealism, its rationality and calm, the perfect equivalence of its thought and expression. In the literature of India, Tagore will thus remain a supremely representative figure—significant of its renaissance and voicing its loftiest dream.

মোর লাগি করিয়ো না শোক,
আমার রয়েছে কৰ্ম, রয়েছে বিশ্বলোক।
মোর পাত্র রিক্ত হয় নাট,
শূন্যেরে করিয়া পূর্ণ, এই ব্রত বহুব সদাট।
উৎকর্ষ আমার লাগি কেহ যদি প্রতীক্ষা থাকে
সেই ধন্য করবে আমাকে।

সুৰূপক্ষ হতে আনি রতনীগন্ধার বস্তুখানি
যে পারে সাজাতে অর্থাখানি
কৃষ্ণপক্ষ রাতে যে আমারে দেখিবারে পায়,
অনীম ক্ষমায়
ভালো মন্দ মিলায়ে সকলি
এবার পূজায় তারি আপনারে দিতে চাই বলি।

—রবীন্দ্রনাথ



গগনে গগনে নব নব দেশে রবি
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দুজনে—পি ১১৮০৮, সহসা ডালপালা তোর, চৈত্র
পবনে—পি ১১৮৩০; আসা যাওয়ার, কবে তুমি—
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পি ১১৮৩৭; আজ দখিন, চলে যায়—পি ১১৮৪০;
জানি হ'ল যাবার, এই সকাল বেলার—পি ১১৮৪২;
অলকে কুমুম, যেতে দাও—পি ১১৮৪৫; ধীরে ধীরে,
কোথা বাইরে দূরে—পি ১১৮৪৮; মম চিন্তে, দূর
দেশী—এন ১৭০৮৩; ছিন্ন পাতার, একদা তুমি—এন
১৭০৮১; আজ কি তাহার, কেন বাজাও—এন ১৭৪৩৪;
বাকী আমি, মোর পথিকের—এম ২৭০৩৪; আজ
জীবনের, বাতাসে তুমি কার—এন ২৭১৭২; আমরা
বৈধেছি! মেঘের কোলে—এন ২৭০৩৫; দেবতার
গ্রাস—এচ টি ৬৭, শাজাহান—এন ২৭০৭৭; দেশ
দেশ নন্দিত করি—পি ৫১৮২; দাঁড়িয়ে তুমি, জাগরণে
যায় বিভাবরী—এন ২৭১৮৫।

The Master Poet's Songs & Recitations.

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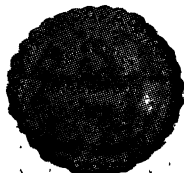
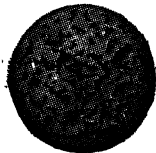
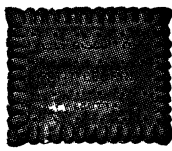
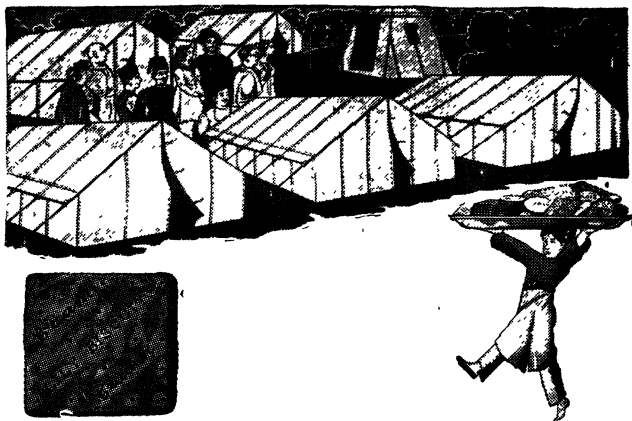
আমি সংসারে মন দিয়েছি
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আজি হ'তে শতবর্ষ পরে
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PAY HOMAGE TO THE HALLOWED MEMORY OF THE KABI-GURU

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The FOUNTAIN of YOUTH

By

KALIDAS NAG



—Tagore with the children of the Pioneers' Commune in Moscow: 1930

RABINDRANATH is no more

The departure of Rabindranath from our midst was not sudden but it came as a stunning blow to us who had grown with the prodigal gifts of his poetry and music. We feel as if we are cut off from the source of his joyous creation, and thus we are guilty of an unconscious blasphemy to the Poet, who was the life-long champion of *Ananda*. So many of us are dazed at the glory and variety of the scintillating gems of the Tagore-treasury, and our heart is full of agonised gratitude.

Gratitude? Are we already thinking of partial repayment of our debts to the Master? Could we, who had the privilege of seeing him and touching him, forget that he did not count on our repayment but hoped for our renewal? He sang of the triumph of Eternal Life and of Eternal Youth and symbolised the theme through his great dramatic creation *Phalguni*—the "Cycle of Spring" staged by the Poet quarter-of-a-century ago. What a sublime apotheosis of Youth, what poignant cry at the temporary eclipse and what robust faith in the Eternal recurrence of the Youth-motif in creation! From the sobbing darkness of the stage there emerged the music of the twilight, of the borderland of the Past and the Future:

"When I saw you with the light of
these eyes,
you were far away from my eyes.
Now when the lights have failed,
may be, I shall find you
in my heart".

Let us settle down to depict Tagore as but a glorious chapter of our past, let

us try to realize what he means for the future. There is a forward urge in the whole *gamut* of his life and art. In his mortal existence Tagore defined the limitations of life with infinite variations but he never missed a single chance of affirming that we can conquer death through the vicarious sacrifice of Love. To love is the great prerogative of youth, and Tagore, to his last days, was singing hymns to Youth,—"the New-Comer on whose pathway the New Age is ever looking wistfully" (*Naba Jataka*)

As a boy he was more a victim than a subject of education, and he dreamed of a New Education Fellowship in which the teacher and the taught would co-operate in joyous creation and re-creation. Forty years ago when he started his school at Santiniketan, he had little support and less funds. But his indomitable youth drew around him a group of young teachers like the poet Satish Chandra Roy and Ajit Kumar Chakravarty, who offered their best and evoked the best in that educational colony. On the untimely death of the former, Tagore made the following significant observations: "He (Satish Ch. Roy) was barely nineteen, but he was born with a luminosity of soul. In him the spirit of renunciation was a natural product of an extraordinary capacity for enjoyment of life".

THE POET was already forty when he started the school of Santiniketan, and forty in those days was considered to be rather close to the age of renunciation. Yet we all know that he was composing about this time the *Chirakumar Sabha* ('The Bachelors' Club') and the *Kshanika* ('The Fleeting One'), which marked an epoch in the history of the love-lyrics of the world. Finan-

cial worries, estrangement of friends, death of wife, of a daughter and a son in quick succession, which might easily have unnerved any other person, transmuted Tagore's genius with the divine touch of suffering. On the eve of his fiftieth birthday, when we had the privilege of sitting at his feet for the first time, he had composed his play *Sarodhasav* (Autumn Festival) and the deathless songs of *Gitanjali*. From his appearance at the great meeting at the Calcutta Town Hall when he read his paper on *Abastha-o-Byabastha* ('The Situation and the Solution') on the 25th August, 1905, to the publication and staging of his famous play *Achalayatan* (1912), the Poet continued to attract towards him thousands of earnest youths who adored the poet because he gave a new significance to their lives enmeshed in ever so many trials and tribulations. Worshipping him while we were school boys, we had the rare privilege of coming into closer and closer personal relations with the Poet-prophet ever since our invitation to participate in the Fiftieth Birthday Celebration at Santiniketan (May, 1911). Our senior friends and guides in those days were Charu Bandyopadhyaya, the novelist; Satyendra Nath Datta, the poet; Ajit Kumar Chakravarty, the critic; Sukumar Roy, the artist-humourist and so many others who are no more. I remember with gratitude the services rendered by them in helping us to understand the Poet and his great mission. Of our friends of College days, I remember in this connection Prasanna Chandra Mahalanobis and Amal Home, among others; for they were living and moving Study Circles on Rabindranath; so was our friend Jivanmaya Ray. Every book, every play, every song of the Poet would then rouse us now to a passionate discussion and again to a silent communion in the atmosphere of

the Poet's ineffable music. The Poet was generous to a fault. He not only suffered us to intrude upon his hours of creative writings (we were too young and too greedy to be discreet) but like a real Patriarch, he shared with us his dreams and melodies. Till his last days he retained that rare tenderness for and confidence in youth, and not only of his own country but of the vast world of youth abroad. Many will bear testimony, from their personal experience, to what I have said above. So I confine my remarks, in the closing portion of this brief and inadequate homage, to the Poet's relations with the youth-world outside India.

THE little school of Santiniketan, at the end of the last war, being slowly but steadily transformed into an unchartered University. On July 3, 1919 the nucleus of the Visva-Bharati was formed when the department for advanced study in Indian literature and, later on, in Tibetan and Chinese, was opened with Pandit Vidhusekhar Sastri as its head. The Poet published his "The Centre of Indian Culture", and sailing away (May 11, 1920) to Europe surprised me in Paris, where I had gone the same year to prepare my thesis under Professor Sylvain Levi. Prof. Levi came, as we all know, as the first guest-Professor of the Visva-Bharati formally inaugurated on December 22, 1921. But before that the Poet served with rare courage and inspiration the cause of international understanding in the West through a series of lectures opening with "The meeting of East and West", which created a stir in the soul of the youths of post-war Europe. In spite of the so-called Treaty signed at Versailles, we all felt that War and not Peace was the pre-occupation of the makers (or unmakers) of post-war Europe.

Romain Rolland, the immortal creator of *John Christopher*, was eagerly seeking to establish personal contact with Rabindranath, who met Rolland in Paris on April 17, 1921. If these two great prophets of the East and the West were allowed to develop their programme of internationalism, then, possibly, Europe and the rest of the world might have been spared the carnage and ruin of the present war. But, alas, things were allowed to drift; the so-called League of Nations degenerated into the diplomatic anti-chamber of big nations, and Tagore and Rolland pronounced their fateful warnings in vain.

In April, 1921, I migrated for a while with Prof. Levi to the University of Strasbourg in Alsace. In that borderland of France and Germany I realised

for the first time the significance of the term *freres-enemies* (brother-enemies) coined by Rolland. Granted goodwill and adequate support to master spirits like Tagore and Rolland, the enemies could possibly have been transformed into brothers. But the opposite was the case, and the Western world is paying the penalty for it. While millions were squandered through the League of Nations, the admirable programme of Intellectual Co-operation in the form of Tagore's Visva-Bharati, failed to receive the financial support from any leading international organization of the West

THE 60th Birthday of the Poet was celebrated quietly in Switzerland. But there were meetings in honour of the Indian poet in all the countries of Europe which he visited. The youths of Germany as well as of France forgot that they were enemies when they recited the poems of the Master, and I have witnessed "scenes of frenzied hero-worship" which marked the meetings of the youth of Belgium and Holland, France and Germany, Scandinavia and Czechoslovakia. Before he left Paris for India (July, 1921), the Poet had the satisfaction of receiving for his Visva-Bharati a valuable library of French classics and Orientalism through the Indian merchants of Paris led by Mr. S. R. Rana. The last great function was his reception at the Swedish Academy of Stockholm, which conferred on him the Nobel prize in Nov. 1913. The memory of those days was recounted by another Nobel Laureate, Selma Lagerlof, who communicated the following to us when we were publishing *The Golden Book of Tagore* on the occasion of the Poet's 70th Birthday:

"When it shall dawn—that day so distant, so ardently longed for when life has reached its goal when the final harmony is attained and the old dream of Paradise has become a reality; then will the men of that time remember the Indian seer as one among those who prepared the happy future, as one among those who, with invincible hope, uprooted the poison-plants of hatred, to sow in their stead the apples of Love and the roses of Peace"

Alas! the dreams of Tagore and Rolland, of Selma Lagerlof and Madam Curie came to be frustrated before their very eyes by the tragic race in rearmament for twenty years behind the facade of disarmament. If only the prophetic warnings of Tagore and his peers were listened to in due time, then the harrowing human sacrifice of to-day

might have been averted. I cannot forget the faces of thousands of young men and women of Europe from Scandinavia to Italy and from France to Russia, who listened to the voice of the great Indian Pacifist, and hoped to live up to Tagore's ideals of Harmony but were sacrificed by the politicians of their respective countries on the altar of the God of War. Yet in the very process of dying, human beings continue to hope, and I have seen so many half-dead, mutilated ex-soldiers of Europe reading with tears in their eyes Tagore's poems ever pointing to the region of "immortality in the very heart of death", as he sang in his *Balaka*, which I had the privilege of translating into French at the request of Mon. Rolland, in collaboration with his friend, the French poet P. J. Jouve (Paris, 1924).

WHEN Tagore started the first experiment in Asia of an International University through his Visva-Bharati, not a single international foundation of Europe or America considered it worth while to offer him even a modest subsidy. To the credit of individual youths however, I must say, it should be noted that Mr. L. K. Elmhirst, a young Englishman and his American wife Mrs. Dorothy Elmhirst, out of their spontaneous love for the Poet and their faith in his mission, made annual gift of Rs. 50,000/- for the development of the rural welfare centre of Sriniketan. The suffering of the toiling millions of India's villages moved Tagore not only to compose some of the noblest poems and short stories, depicting the life of the down-trodden, but also to devote all his surplus earnings to the amelioration of their condition. His passionate and active sympathy for the submerged humanity found the noblest expression in his *Letters from Russia* published on his return from his grand reception in the Soviet Republic. The most touching document of that period was the picture in which Tagore, the Tolstoy of India, is seen, "mobbed" by the children of the Pioneer's Commune in Moscow (1930).

THE Poet Laureate of Asia could not and did not forget the rising generation of Asiatic youths. On his way to and from America the Poet visited Burma and Malaya, China and Japan. In 1924 he received the first formal invitation from the Chinese people through their accredited leader Liang Chi Chao. Privileged to accompany him on that historic tour, I observed, with my friends Nandalal Bose and Kahit Mohan Sen., how here in the Far East, as in the West, Tagore's message

worked as an inspiration and a warning. His repeated admonitions to Japan are well known. His criticism of the slavish imitation of the West by the Chinese youth at first antagonised the student community³ of China but we watched with our own eyes how they gradually understood the profound significance of the Poet's message so that Dr. Hu Hsi, the uncrowned King of the Chinese youth (now the Chinese ambassador in Washington) came to be one of the ardent admirers of the Poet. Since then Republican China has looked upon Tagore's Santiniketan as a place of pilgrimage, where they have established the admirable Institute of Sino-Indian Research, the Cheena-Bhavan under the direction of Prof. Tan Yun Shan. I found that most of his books translated into English were re-translated into Chinese and Japanese. In other parts of Asia, less progressive in the publishing line, the thoughts of Tagore permeate the youth-groups with a mysterious facility.

The youths of Indonesia and Indo-China know and love India through the books of Tagore. We saluted him as the *Purodha* of our Greater India Society, for, apart from his literary contributions, he was the real pioneer of the Greater India movement, personally leading his mission of culture through Java and Bali, Siam and Cambodia, China and Japan and even beyond, right across the Pacific to the North and to South America.

Of the Islamic countries of the Near East he visited Egypt, the veritable centre of Arabic culture, whence came a rare collection of Arabic books, a gift of King Fuad, to Visva-Bharati (1926). In 1932 he visited Iran and forged the cultural link between Iran and India by welcoming the young Persian poet Pouré Daoud. Thus, to prepare an exhaustive bibliography of the translations and adaptations of Tagore in the various literary languages of Asia

will be the most formidable task before the future historians of modern Asiatic thought. Men and women of Young Asia as well as of Young India are facing a new orientation in their outlook because of the poetical and spiritual legacies left to them by Rabindranath Tagore.

BEFORE taking final leave of us the Poet-prophet sounded another warning through his "Crisis in Civilization" pronounced on his 81st Birthday. The world was sufficiently gloomy then, and it is decidedly gloomier to-day, when we do no longer see his face beaming with Hope and Joy. Whatever trials lie ahead of us, we can never forget that he revealed to us the "Joy that is in commonality spread". He discovered for us the Fountain of Youth, which dares to look beyond death towards immortality.

Tagore is not dead, victory to Tagore !

সবুজের অভিযান

ওরে নবীন, ওরে আমার কাঁচা,

ওরে সবুজ, ওরে অবুজ,

আধ-মরাদের ঘা ঘেরে তুই বাঁচা ।

রক্ত-আলোর মদে মাতাল হোরে

আজকে যে ঘা বলে বলুক তোরে,

সকল তর্ক হেলায় তুচ্ছ করে

পুঙ্খটি তোয় উড়ে তুলে নাচা ।

আয় ছুরন্ত, আয়রে আমার কাঁচা ॥

* * *

ঐ যে প্রবীণ, ঐ যে পরম পাকা

চক্ষু কর্ণ ছুটি ভানায় ঢাকা

ঝিমায় যেন চিরপটে ঝাঁক

অন্ধকারে বন্ধ করা খাঁচায় ।

আয় জীবন্ত, আয়রে আমার কাঁচা ।

ঝড়ের মাতন, বিজয়-কেতন নেড়ে

অট্টহাস্তে আকাশখানা ফেড়ে

ভোলানাথের ঝোলাঝুলি ঝেড়ে

ভুলগুলো সব আনরে বাছা-বাছা ।

আয় প্রমত্ত, আয়রে আমার কাঁচা ॥

* * *

আপদ আছে, জানি আঘাত আছে

তাই জেনে তো কবে পরাণ নাচে,

ঘুচিয়ে দে ভাই পুঁথি-পোড়োর কাছে

পথে চলার বিধি বিধান বাচা

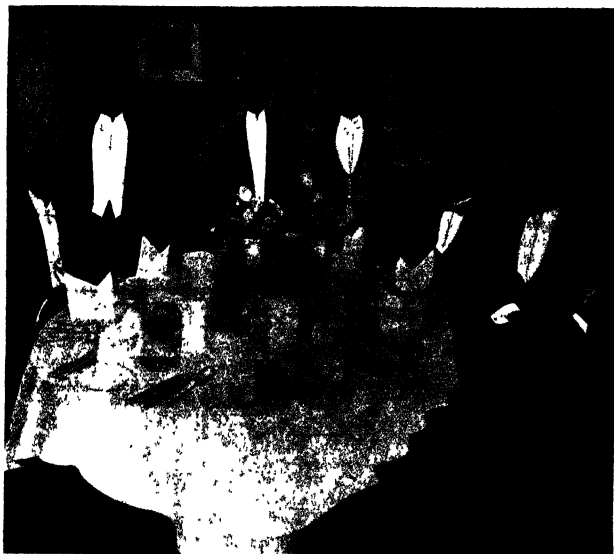
আয় প্রমত্ত, আয়রে আমার কাঁচা ॥

চির যুবা তুই যে চিরজীবী

জীর্ণ অধা ধরিয়ে দিয়ে

প্রাণ অফরাণ ছড়িয়ে দেবার দিবি ।

—রবীন্দ্রনাথ



Courtesy: Kiran Sankar Roy

Photo: Gillman Oxford

—At a dinner given at Randolph Hotel by the Bengali students at Oxford, May 23, 1911
Left to Right: Shaheed Suhrawardy, Kiran Sankar Roy, THE POET, S. K. Gupta, Sahid Suhrawardy,
The Surendra Kumar Sen (Delhi), Basanta Kumar Mullick

TAGORE AT OXFO

By

SHAHID SUHRAWARDY

IN 1913 when Rabindranath Tagore received the Nobel Prize I was a student at Oxford. In those days we were not many Indians, but we had amongst us a fervent, energetic band of young men, passionately patriotic, inclined to the extreme brand of nationalism and intolerant of moderation in all its forms. Scientific Marxism, the creed of the modern Oxford Indian, was unknown to us, though we also called ourselves socialists, meaning by socialism, in the manner of many contemporary Indian nationalists, a liberal loosely mystical devotion to the idea of the Motherland. It was in 1912 that

this group took over the Oxford Indian Club, a vague institution for tea and cakes on a Sunday afternoon founded some time previously by Har Dayal, and transformed it into the Oxford Majlis, which became not only the centre for all kinds of revolutionary debates at Oxford, but a powerful organisation upon which, because of our habit of voting solidly, depended the results of the election for the presidentship of the Oxford Union. To our meetings there came all the prominent orators among the students of the University, who sought our approval and suffrage by tempering their views on India according to

our liking. We had indeed become a force in University politics, and Oxford Indians of the time were very conscious of their position as they sauntered down the High after dinner and exchanged uncomplimentary remarks and often blows with English students, who would reply to their anti-British slogans by asking them to go back to their black country. One can understand to what an extent there was an increase in our self-opinionated insolence when the rumour came to our ears that the highest prize in literature was going to be awarded to one who belonged to us. It is difficult now for me to

recapture the elation and the ecstasy of those days, but I still remember distinctly that look of awe which was in my landlady's eyes when she brought in the breakfast with the morning paper containing the scoop, of which we had come to know earlier from 'Mullickda' who had somehow already met the Tagores in London. Outwardly we, of course, took this sudden rise in our status for granted, but I must confess to a sense of relief that for the first time, after centuries, the Indians whose past greatness we profoundly believed, without having much knowledge about it, had been placed once again on the map of the world. Till then we Indians were being looked upon as the degenerate descendants of those who had composed the Vedic hymns (in Max Muller's translations), or as snake-charmers or theosophists or, at best, terrorists from the banks of the Ganges.

I am ashamed to say that owing to defective upbringing I was then, as I am now, ignorant of Bengal except of the most debased kind, and so I had heard with a certain amount of scepticism of the great popularity of Tagore's verses, which were being sung, I was told, in every village home in Bengal. Therefore to me, as to those who first came to know of him through translations, the first renderings of his verses in English, not only because of their novelty but for their high personal literary flavour came as a great revelation. I must confess, however, that during that first period not a little of that unbounded appreciation of the newly-initiated which I had for the Poet's works was due to my knowledge of the association and collaboration with him of Rothenstein, Sturge Moore and particularly Yeats, a name draped in our fancy with magic raiments. About Santiniketan I knew a little more. That year among the newcomers at Oxford there was a particularly chubby youth with a great deal of personal attractiveness, who had been brought up

there and who described it to us in glowing colours. This was Apurva Chanda. After Santiniketan he had gone to the Central Hindu College at Benares and had come up to Oxford with a number of young men from that institution. They were all vegetarians, extremely devout, long haired and soft-spoken. During week-ends their number would become larger by the arrival from Cambridge of similar young men, notable amongst whom was Sri Prakash whom I came to know well afterwards, and it was said of them that in the early morning they gathered under a tree and chanted Vedic hymns. I did not believe there was any vestige of truth in all this except that they all lived in a house in Wellington Square and that behind locked iron-railings there actually was a tree in that square. Notwithstanding with that thoughtless irresponsibility, which is the charm and the most irritating quality of Oxford undergraduates, I too helped in the diffusion of this legend. The only thing, which might have sustained the story was that Apurva with a beatific expression had the habit of half-reciting and half-chanting a few of the Poet's songs and we used to see in them through our burning imagination a beauty such as never was on land or sea. Apurva's singing not only took us in, which was easy, as we had no competence except our enthusiasm but even Philip Heseltine who later on under the name of Peter Warlock made such a name for himself in English music

the boots of British imperialism. For, in those days if one thing we hated above everything else, it was experience. Naturally Indian public men in England used to dislike us, because of our bad name, yet they always came, almost afraid of annoying us by refusing our invitation, which would usually be entrusted to me as I had developed a gift for treacherous blandishment. I used to arouse their interest in us by mock humility, pretending that we were thirsting to be taught, while all alone I knew what fate awaited them once they walked into our parlor. I could give a long list of distinguished Indians who were thus brought to Oxford by me, only one person named us, that was Sarojini Naidu, another was consistently obdurate and that was Jinnah. Even in those days he was a difficult person. So it is quite intelligible, if, given our reputation, we were a little afraid that the Poet might not accept our invitation. I was asked to proceed to London and explain to him, should occasion arise, that as far as he was concerned, we had transformed ourselves into a domesticated herd of antelopes. Whilst I was casting and recasting the speech I was to make, posturing in the presence of my closest friends in my rooms, two circumstances made my task easier. Firstly, we heard that the Poet had already been invited by Manchester College to come and address a gathering there and that he had consented. So I had only to request him to divide his time between them and us when he came over. Secondly, the Poet's son and daughter-in-law were visiting Oxford and some of us were asked by 'Mullickda' to luncheon to meet them.

'Mullickda' was the doyen of the Indian student community not only in years, but also in material prosperity. He did not live at college or in digs, as all of us did, but in a large boarding-house on Woodstock Road, where, according to report, he was being cruelly rooked. He was the naivest and best of men, exceedingly generous to all of us, paying up our debts and spoiling us with gifts. Nevertheless, his lunches were

THE Oxford Majlis used to invite all prominent Indian politicians, who happened to be in England, as well as a great many English public men with interest in India. In fact, it was a loved game of ours to get hold of a well-known Indian political leader, cajole and flatter him, lavish hospitality upon him, invite him to the Majlis meeting and then skin him alive, proving to him that he was a worthless worm, who, in spite of his nationalistic pretensions, had done nothing else all his life but lick

extremely boring because of that flair of his, which he has retained till this day, of gathering round an abundant table men and women the most incompatible in taste and temperament. He was already promulgating some sort of a philosophic doctrine of his own backed by lavish hospitality and no wonder in that city of large leisures he was drawing to himself people of widely divergent types. Inspite of the great affection we all,"and particularly I, had for him, I accepted his invitation with an inward fear at the prospect of being wedged in, as had happened before, between a lean clergyman from Pusey House bent on saving my soul and the fast-extinguishing charms of the widow of a defunct professor. Therefore this particular luncheon turned out to be such a delightful surprise. Incongruous people there certainly were present but the grace of Pratima Devi and the spontaneous urbanity of Rathi Babu gently smoothed down all the angles and for a short while we were happily enveloped in the kindly atmosphere of a Bengal home. I shall always be thankful to 'Mullickda' for the opportunity he gave me of knowing these noble persons for whom my affection has since then ever been on the increase. Coupled with the gratitude which I like many others feel towards them for their unchanging kindness and goodness is my great admiration for that fine and rare talent for decorative art on the stage which makes Pratima Devi unique among our artists.

ON arriving at Paddington Station I took a taxi to Chelsea where the Poet and his suite were putting up in a big house. I was introduced into a large-sized room where I first saw the Poet. He was sitting on a divan and along the walls there were many chairs occupied by men and women, Indian, British and continental, who sat in rapt silence, as in a prayer-hall. In one corner of the room an Englishwoman was modelling the

Poet's head in clay whilst in another a fierce young man, a Pole perhaps, was sketching, as I saw from a corner of my eye, the fine folds of his robe. The windows were wide-open on to the Embankment and I do not now remember if incense was burning in that room, but if it was not, it ought to have been because the atmosphere was so charged with awe and admiration. My visit was formal as the Oxford programme had already been fixed upon by Rathi Babu. Disconcerted as I felt at the collusive silence of the place, I was a little relieved at the thought that the invitation I had brought need not, by being communicated in words, strike a harsh note in that stillness. At that time I thought that the Poet's immobility and his closed eyes were due to his posing for the artists in the room, but since I have understood better for he possessed the rare quality of being able to withdraw within himself at will and relapse without effort into the statuesque. That capacity for complete aloofness in the midst of contacts, that sudden communion with the inner life in the intervals of spoken words, that faculty of abstracting oneself from one's surroundings, he shared with the prophets and the visionaries. Such men one may come to know very well and yet never be familiar with. I have seen him later once in Paris after a lively conversation in a company of which he was the very soul, for he could be humorous, playful, almost childlike, chill into a beautiful stone mellowed with age, making me think of what Hammurabi would have looked like had that great Babylonian law giver ever the chance of being modelled by a Grecian master. On that occasion I was maliciously amused to see the consternation of the charming and exuberant Comtesse de Noailles, who was sponsoring the exhibition of the Poet's paintings in Paris and was treating him before all the assembled artists and writers as her special preserve.

I am not sure who was the president of the Majlis that year,

whether it was Shaheed* or Kiran Sankar Roy, but he was of short stature, for I remember how the Poet in his flowing robes loomed large above him as he alighted from the train at Oxford station. Beside the entire Indian colony on the platform there were a number of English people headed by Estlin Carpenter, vigorous and bearded, who was to be the Poet's host. The arrangement was that our visitor was to dine that night with the committee of the Majlis at the Randolph Hotel, breakfast in my rooms the next morning, deliver his address at Manchester College in the early afternoon and then attend the large reception the Majlis was giving him at a hired hall in the city. The whole of that morning we were busy fixing up details, the most important of which to us was to arrange to garland the Poet when he arrived by train. We gave, interrupting one another, instructions to the best florist at Oxford as to what kind of garland one uses on such occasions in India, carefully suppressing the fact of the sharpwire, which has lacerated the breast of many a distinguished Indian, and we were promised that a suitable object would be delivered at the station in time. Our horror can be imagined when the president turning to the florist's assistant, who had arrived breathless just at that very moment, unpacked the thing from tissue paper and held aloft in the air before the Poet's bowed head a funeral wreath, stiff in wire-frame, decked with wide-staring white flowers.

ONE could not find anywhere a happier set of young men as during that evening in a private room at the Randolph Hotel. The Poet was in great form. He was talking to us all the time, commenting on the changes that had taken place since his last visits to Europe; he spoke of India, now solemnly and now playfully (we were too intense about India to enjoy that particular mood of his) and then

*The writer's brother, Hon'ble Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy.—R.D., C. M. G.

hastened with comprehending indulgence to our wild talks, in which we attempted to outshine one another. He ate little of the food, the menu of which I had prepared after careful thought, and I was a little glad to see how he banished one after another those culinary inanities which go under the name of vegetarian dishes in England. Rabindranath was a great connoisseur of the fine things of life, and also understood good food. In fact, he was not of those who glorify their failing digestion with reference to the high ideals of our traditional asceticism. I have always received encouragement at his hands for my frivolous advocacy of gastronomy. I remember him once at Santiniketan as he sat reclining on a low arm-chair and listened with smiling attention to a long confession of mine as a glutton in many lands. He was so interested that I am told it was one of those rare occasions when he did not order the meeting to be interrupted for the sake of the evening prayer which it is customary to offer there.

THE Poet came a little late to breakfast to my place the next morning as he had lost his way in Christ Church meadows and was full of the enchantment of Oxford. His visit had taken place during the summer time when Oxford was in her most beautiful month with laburnum hanging down in full bloom and the ivies on the old walls of colleges a mass of scarlet flame. It was a delight going round with him down the narrow lanes and along the broad stone thoroughfares and sharing in his joy at the sight of so much squandered loveliness. Only we were never alone as his unusual appearance attracted a large crowd that followed us about. That evening my landlady's little daughter told me she had seen me in the streets with Father Christmas. She did not know what treasures he had brought into our lives that year. Before luncheon, propped up on bright cushions, he sat on a punt, as we took him down that part of

the river where it narrows under overhanging branches. He sat stone-still all the while in his shining garments of white and in the noon-haze I fancied to myself Orpheus, sculpted on the prow of some Hellenic boat, mirrored in the waters of the Ionian seas.

ONE thing I noticed that afternoon in the vast hall of Manchester College, crammed with a brilliant and awe-inspired crowd of professors, dons and undergraduates, that the Poet's voice was ill suited to large audiences. Even in private conversation, when he first spoke to me, I was struck by a certain discrepancy between his appearance, on which nature had showered her most exquisite gifts of beauty and dignity, and his voice, which did not seem to belong to his magnificent exterior. In itself the voice was melodious and expressive but it might have belonged to any one else. It possessed a fine timbre but lacked in tonality. I have always wanted to ask members of his household whether a voice like his was capable of being raised in discussion or reprimand. I suspect, were he ever moved to anger, which I doubt, he would probably employ the subtler instruments of irony and humorous innuendo. I hope the newly-baked fanatics of the Poet will not accuse me of disrespect towards him for these observations of mine. That would be very unfair because my love and reverence for him, since I first met him, has bordered on adoration. I am trying with difficulty to delve into my memory and I am faithfully recording my first reactions to him before more frequent contacts made me get used to his ways.

I do not remember either the subject or the gist of the Poet's lecture, I was too much under the influence of his enchanting personality, as he sat slightly bowed on his high chair reading out from a manuscript, detached and patriarchal, to listen to his words. My eyes have always given me greater pleasure than my ear. I know that evening I

felt serenely peaceful as I hurried along after the meeting to catch up the fast-striding figure of Robert Bridges, who had come all trekked up in his full academic robes to do honour to the Indian poet, and walked part of the way with him. Bridges did not speak, he evidently did not wish to share his impressions with me. He was a curious old man, garrulous on occasions and then suddenly silent. When parting from me he asked me in that kindly curt tone, which was so characteristic of him, to come to tea the next afternoon when he had invited Tagore to his house.

ROBERT BRIDGES lived in a large house on a hill six miles from Oxford. In those days the road to it was long and difficult and to come to him one had to traverse meadows, pass by farmsteads and then climb a wood within which unconcealed lay his house. This gave to each visit to him the flavour of a pilgrim's make. During his lifetime he had already become legendary. There were plenty of stories about his whimsicality and crankiness and though he was the kindest of men, as some of us Indians had occasion to know, he had a reputation for being abrupt and rude. Of all men I have met he acted up to the injunction of Christ to his Apostles to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. He would be often seen, like some large bird, ranging the hillside with his broad-brimmed hat closely set over his head and his loose black cloak flapping behind him. He rarely came down to Oxford, and when he did, people would stand about watching his tall figure loom from the larger roads to the quiet lanes. He sometimes stood for hours before a bookstall in the street, reading a book he had picked up unmindful of the crowd behind him. He and Rabindranath Tagore were the two most beautiful old men I have ever seen. And yet I thought that afternoon when I saw them together how different they were in the quality of their attractiveness. There was nothing

of the sage, rather of an overgrown schoolboy, about Bridges. With his splendid face marked accurately with wrinkles, like a perfect autumn leaf, his healthy complexion and spare figure he looked as one who had always lived the outdoor life in touch with fields and animals. There was manly energy in his large frame and even in his long unkempt hair. In other ways too there could be no greater contrasts than he and Tagore and I thought that there in that house for once, physically, the East had met the West. For no poet in England was so indigenous as Bridges, so unexotic, so classically free from the touch of the Orient. And Tagore in my eyes represented the melody, the abundance, the grace of the East; to him Beauty came as she flowed down streams or awoke on the sprays of the breeze-tossed corn; she came to him naturally as the cherished one to her lover. Whereas to Bridges she was a burden; with him there was a constant struggle to reduce the conflict between language and mood to the counterpoints of harmony, to force Beauty into the fierce shackles of tone and

rhythm. I know this is not saying all. There is probably no deep difference after all between the East and the West, but it is true that each moulds in its own manner human passions and temperaments. Anyway, it is good that Beauty has many moods; she yields to him who fights for her as to him who succumbs to her.

I have seen Rabindranath Tagore at Chilswell, Bridges' home, twice, once then and about a dozen of years later. I cannot quite disengage in my memory the incidents of the two occasions. I remember, however, one evening when the two sat together on a jutting hillock in the corner of the garden, which commands a superb view of Oxford. In fact, in 1914, Bridges had once said to me that were Germans ever to occupy his house, what a wonderful emplacement that hillock would afford to artillery reared to destroy completely with one shattering shot the eternal beauty of Oxford. For it is true that from the bench on which the two poets sat all the ugly accretions of modern Oxford were

hidden by rolling uplands and one could only see the proud towers and spires against the sunset. Such must have been the vision of the lovely city that first burst upon the sight of Erasmus as he trudged along the road from his distant home to find in her the solace of faith tempered with reason. Tagore had come over in a hansom-cab and I was going back to Oxford on foot. After he had left, Bridges excitedly spoke how that evening, more than he could from his works, he had come to understand Tagore's wise spirit. Then turning brusquely he added: Tagore is an extraordinarily good-looking fellow. There is something unreal about him, something Assyrian, Old Asiatic. Do you think he puts gold in his beard? When I suggested that it was the colour of the sunset that had been playing on their faces, he broke into a loud schoolboy laughter and said: You cannot know the vanity of poets. And striding to the mirror on the wall of his vast study he carefully combed with his fingers his hair and beard tousled by the wind.

*By arrangement with
"Chaturanga", Aswin, 1348*

O THOU the last fulfilment of life, Death, my death, come and whisper to me'

Day after day have I kept watch for thee; for thee have I borne the joys and pangs of life.

All that I am, that I have, that I hope, and all my love have ever flowed towards thee in depth of secrecy.

One final glance from thine eyes and my life will be ever thine own.

The flowers have been woven and the garland is ready for the bridegroom. After the wedding the bride shall leave her home and meet her lord alone in the solitude of night.



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The Myriad-minded Poet

THIS century, in its eagerness to enter the maw of eternity, had barely learnt to toddle. In a mansion,—the far side of which was washed by the waters of *Ganga Mai* as she flowed past the crescent-shaped Benares bank studded with numerous flights of steps and above them spired fanelets and fanes,—an Englishman was being shown a fly-shuttle handloom. He was not clean-shaven or with only a moustache, as had been his countrymen whom I, then in the early twenties and happening to be there, had theretofore met. His face, instead, had a generous beard, reddish-brown in hue. It suited his visage, gave it distinction. Artists in Europe, I was told in a discreet whisper, affected that style. Painter he—E. B. Havell—was by profession; and at the time the Principal of the School of Art in Calcutta. He was on a brief visit to that ancient cultural centre.

The fly-shuttle loom had been brought from Scandinavia by a Sinhalese Buddhist—the Anagarika Dharmapala—who had recently settled in Sarnath to revive the glories of the “middle path” in the land in which it was originally laid. It carried the painter-Principal’s mind from the Ganges to the Hooghly bank. He told us about a man of broad culture and rare attainments and charm who, for years, had been seeking to infuse new life into Indian handicrafts. Rabindranath Tagore by name, he was an uncle of Havell’s most promising pupil—Abanindranath Tagore. For many years he had been introducing hand-looms of improved type in the cottages upon his family estates that covered many broad acres. Even before that he, while still a young man, had, with some relations, opened a stores in Calcutta from which naught was sold that had not been made in India—that was not *Swadeshi*.

Rabindranath Tagore had been composing verse almost from his

By
Sr. NIHAL SINGH

filled with lyrical beauty and infancy, the English artist went on. It was as inspiring as it was haunting melody. An artist in the broadest sense of the word, he had been Havell’s and Abanindranath’s mainstay in the revival of the Eastern traditions of art—in turning the youth of our country away from slavish, soul-destroying imitation of the West.

Such was my first image of Tagore.

II

DURING the middle of October, 1905, I found myself in Calcutta. It was not my first visit to that city: but since I had been there before the metropolis—metropolis in the real sense of the term, for the capital had not yet been shifted to Delhi—some subtle change had occurred. The streets and the buildings standing alongside them were, to be sure, the same as they had been. Not the current of life, however. It no longer flowed evenly—sluggishly—almost imperceptibly—in a bed that had been fashioned for it by outsiders. Charged with some force concealed beneath the surface, it was sweeping headlong in the channel it had dug for itself.

There was a purposefulness in the mien of the men that I had not detected during my previous visits. Indignation—resentment—burning within their breasts gave a glow to their countenances. The Governor-General of the day—the Earl, later the Marquis, Curzon—had tried to bend them to his will. Failing to do so, he had flung at them the taunt that they and truth would ever be strangers to each other. Followed the fiat for the bisection of Bengal.

That ukase administratively partitioned the province: but it united the people politically.

Only in India could resentment have found the expression that it had done in Calcutta at that time. It had ushered in a movement of fraternization. Men understood the need of standing shoulder to shoulder as they never had done before. In token of it they were tying to one another’s wrists bits of red and white thread that, through the ages, has, in our country, symbolized fraternal love.

Banglar Mati, Banglar Jal, was, at that fateful moment, upon their lips. The author of that song instinct with patriotic fervour—Rabindranath Tagore—had been one of the prime movers in rousing, shaping and guiding the emotional stream that soon burst Bengal’s bounds and, sweeping over the entire Motherland, powerfully affected life throughout India. In this wise did I see the floodgates of emotion opened at a word from Tagore.

IT might have been the spring of 1907, or it might have been the summer. I cannot recollect which. To Hongo-ku, the district of Tokyo

where, surrounded by thousands of Japanese and non-Japanese students, I then dwelt, came a young Bengali. As I remember him he had just emerged from his ‘teens. His people, I was given to understand, owned large landed estates and he had been sent abroad to make science the hand-maiden of agriculture.

Rabindranath Tagore—to name him—was the eldest son of the Poet of whom Havell had given me such a vivid impression and of whose power to move people I had witnessed unforgettable demonstrations in Calcutta. He did not tarry long in Japan, but moved on to the United States of America. So did I. We met in Illinois,

where he had joined the State University and I was in journalism in Chicago, as I had been in Tokyo and elsewhere in the Orient before. Through contact with him and later, upon my return to India in May, 1910, with a cousin of his—Shrimati Sarala Devi Choudhurani—the mental image that I had formed of Rabindranath became amplified—clearer. To it were added touches by Bhupendra Nath Basu and Rash Behari Ghosh, whom I encountered in Simla in the summer of that year.

A many-sided personality was Rabi Babu's, I learnt. While managing property, he composed verse, wrote and produced plays, sang and acted, spoke in public, contributed articles to literary and artistic publications, off and on had one or another magazine of his own and thought nothing of filling it from cover to cover with notes, articles, poems, humorous sketches, stories, novellettes and serials from his own pen. He was a teacher, too, himself taking classes in an educational institution that he had opened on his father's estate, Santiniketan, in Bolpur, a village in western Bengal.

Love of the land of his birth ever tugged at his heart-strings. He felt keenly the humiliation of political subjection. His soul writhed under the shame of it. Plaintive notes at times issued from his lyre. This mood seldom depressed him for long, however: for depression drugs the faculties and devitalizes them. Conscious of his people's potential strength, his creative force lifted up his drooping spirits.

At the moment of which I write Bhupen Basu was wroth at Rabi, whom he accused of deserting Calcutta and immuring himself in Bolpur. That was just the time, he said, when they could not dispense with the Poet's presence—his active, incessant help. He should have been with them to light up the gloom of the political movement—to pull the people, with the power of his lifting poetry and forceful prose, out of the morass of depression.

Bhupendra's soul was filled with indignation at the fetters that were being forged on the legislative anvil at Simla. If he could have

had his way he would have had Rabi cease wooing the muses and throw himself headlong into the struggle.

Rash Behari Ghosh seemed to be of the same mind. His expression was, however, much more restrained.

III

HOW happy were these critics when the harvest that the Poet had garnered in the seclusion of Bolpur was given to the world! Among them Bhupen Basu. Of that later in correct sequence.

It was, I think, from Ramananda Bahu, who has been to me more like a brother than a friend since my early manhood, that I first learnt of what was happening at Santiniketan. While there for a respite from his arduous editorial labours, the Poet said to him: "You have been a schoolmaster. You may care to glance at these."

"These" were some translations in English by Rabindranath of his poems in Bengali. Having urged him, on more than one occasion, to undertake such work, Ramananda Chatterjee was only too eager to read them. Delighted with the elegance of the diction—the appositeness of the phrase—he begged the Poet to persevere.

A little later Rabindranath came to London. Some of the translated poems were read by William Butler Yeats at William Rothenstein's house, to a gathering of literateurs and artists. They were published by the India Society in a small, thin volume entitled "Gitanjali". Every critic acclaimed it. Followed the Nobel prize. In a few weeks he became the world's—instead of merely Bengal's—Poet. This story has been told by me and by others intimately associated with him: and therefore needs no amplification here.

About this time, or, possibly, a little later, Kedarnath Das Gupta, who had set up the Union of the East and of the West, came to our house. His society, he said, was giving Rabindranath a reception. Would I mind if the translation I had made of one of his patriotic poems were read at this function?

Many were the fetes and festivals held in his honour. Tagore's bearing at these greatly impressed me. Neither word nor gesture indicated elation. Ever calm—ever dignified—was he. His manner was gentle with man and maid. His speech was soft. Every one who saw him—heard him—regarded him as a seer—a sage—sent by the East.

IV

DURING one of my visits to Dublin Yeats, talking to me at his house in Merrion Square, close to which I then resided for the best part of the year, spoke to me thus of Rabindranath's writing: "Most persons write so that if you were to detach a sentence from the context, it would have no meaning. With Tagore's writing, however, it is just the other way about. Almost any sentence will stand by itself—almost any clause."

"The more you study his compositions, the more significant do they become. They grow upon you."

About that time A. E., who was a painter as well as a poet and prose writer of outstanding merit, remarked to me also in Dublin that Tagore must have an astonishingly good memory. He could be a painter—a great painter—if he liked: for painting was firstly the formation of the mental image and secondly the transfer of it, with fidelity, to paper or canvas.

JAMES RAMSAY MACDONALD lived just one street away from me during the time I occupied a house in Belsize Park Avenue, Hampstead, London. After his visit to India in connection with the Public Services Commission (I believe), we were having a talk in a bedroom he had converted into his literary den. He had, he informed me, been to Tagore's school at Bolpur. It had impressed him. A bit of old India, it appeared to him to be—pupils and teachers forming a family group—instruction under leafy trees instead of in stuffy rooms—

training for the mind and for the hand—character building and character building in consonance with ages-old cultural codes.

Yet, would I believe it, he remarked, this institution of Tagore's was suspect in official eyes! The young men who were passing through it would not, the Olympians feared, quite fit into the pattern laid down by them.

One forenoon, when I was calling upon Lord Carmichael shortly after his return from Bengal, I told him what MacDonald had said and asked him if it were a fact that Rabindranath Tagore was regarded as something of a rebel and his Santiniketan a hatchery for sedition.

"Some officials are capable of any folly," was the ex-Governor's cryptic but caustic comment. Then he went on to tell me of religio-social institutions he had taken off the secret police list.

VI

ONE evening in the autumn of 1919 Surendranath Banerjee, who had come to London in connection with the Montagu measure for constitutional reform in India, then committed to a Joint Committee of the two Houses of Parliament, was in reminiscent mood as we sat in front of a cheery fire in the drawing room of his flat facing Hyde Park. Interrupting his flood of words—he was as eloquent in private as he was on the platform—I told him of my experience in Calcutta during the partition days.

Perhaps, it would come to me as a surprise, he added to my recital, that Rabi broke many a lance in defence of him at that juncture. Some impatient idealists had sought to oust him from the leadership of the movement. The Poet would not, however, hear of it. He spoke and wrote against the swapping of horses in mid-stream. Challenged he refuted every argument advanced. A staunch friend and ally was he to Surendranath during that terribly trying period.

So had the Acharya Jagadish Chunder Bose found Rabi during



—WITH HIS LIFELONG FRIEND AND ADMIRER J. C. BOSE, 1913

This photograph was taken by the late Mr. H. Bose on November 23, 1913 at Santiniketan when a deputation of several hundred people went there in a special train to congratulate the Poet on his receiving the Nobel Prize. Standing from left to right are Rev. W. S. Holland of St. Paul's College, J. C. Bose, Chaital Bose, Asutosh Chaudhuri.

Courtesy: Sudendra Mohan Bose

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their life-long friendship. None was prouder of the Poet's achievements.

Recognition was unduly delayed, however, the great scientist insisted. It took decades and decades for the world to wake up to the merit of Rabi's verse.

"Such intellectual slaves are we," he added, "that not until the West had acclaimed him did many Indians trouble about him. What was worse still, following the bestowal of the Nobel prize upon him our people began to fall all over themselves to do him honour.

"And for their pains they were soundly trounced by Rabi." With his great gift of mimicry the scientist recounted to me the scene at Santiniketan when a deputation of influential men waited upon him to offer him felicitations. How taken aback were they when the man they had come to honour turned upon them and told them to their faces that they were no more than intellectual serfs.

VII

IN July, 1921, the Commons had their say anent the terrible deeds that had been perpetrated in the Punjab in the spring of 1918—some fifteen months

after the humiliations heaped upon the people in Lahore and Amritsar. Edwin Samuel Montagu, His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for India, had laboured hard to secure some sort of action that would commend itself to our people. He failed in that objective. He, nevertheless, was booed within my hearing—within my sight—because the stand he had taken was deemed detrimental to Imperial interests.

The Lords, too, had their say on the subject. The matter remained, however, just where it was.

The evening after the debate I was seated in a corner of a bow window in an apartment overlooking Kensington Gardens. Opposite me sat the Poet, who, as I remember it, had but recently arrived. He looked bent under the weight of those enormities in the Punjab and even more so at the escape of the highly placed miscreants. The substance of his talk with me I incorporated then and there into a cablegram that, with some slight modification by him, I sent out to one of my newspapers in India. As it reflected his burning love for the Motherland and the grandeur of his soul, I reproduce it in part:

"... he felt grieved and insulted at the unashamed con-

donation of a brutal outrage by the very class from which our rulers are recruited.

" 'This makes us,' he said, 'realize the futility and humiliation of relying for any boon of any value from those who hold us in contempt. Only by removing the inner sources of weakness and organizing our social, educational and economic life, can we rise out of our present depth of degradation.

" 'Be prepared for many sacrifices, to undergo the suffering for the common cause. Sink differences of all kinds. Promote the spirit of concord and co-operation. The present shock of disillusionment, if accepted in the right spirit, will prove a blessing in disguise and form the basis of a new era of a career of national self-respect, spiritual emancipation and material progress. Only by freeing ourselves from the spirit of dependence and mendicancy, casting out fear and guarding ourselves against the wasteful destruction of impotent anger and vengeful resentment, can we rise to the true measure of greatness.' " *

No one in the wide, wide world was more moved by the Poet's act in stripping himself of the honour of knighthood that had been conferred upon him by His Majesty the King-Emperor, as a sign of protest over these outrages, than Bhupen Basu, at the time a Member of the India Council and Montagu's confidant. In his admiration for that brave stand

inspired by patriotism of the most exalted character, he wholly forgot Rabindranath's withdrawal from politics a decade or so earlier.

VIII

THE Poet knew that Montagu would be thrown to the wolves at the first moment convenient to his colleagues. The diehards, under Birkenhead's lead, had sworn to oust him. It was only a matter of time when he was thrust into the political wilderness.

India—the India that regards itself as educated—is realistic. So, at least, it fancies itself to be. Montagu, it thought, had failed it—failed it in the greatest crisis in Indo-Anglian annals.

Knowing the world as the Poet did, he did not blame any one in particular for a judgment that, in the circumstance, made no allowance for an effort bravely put forth—even though it proved largely fruitless. In the situation that obtained, naught else was to be expected.

A dual motive egged him on to action. One of these was to serve India—the other to succour a genuine friend of India.

In the course of an interview with a representative of the *Observer* (with which I was then connected) he urged Montagu's appointment as Lord Chelmsford's successor. Though he had faults—temperamental and otherwise—there was none among Britain's ruling classes, he thought, who would make so sympathetic and

imaginative a Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

The diehard clique would not hear of the suggestion. Lord Reading easily obtained the prize. A little later Montagu threw up his job over the impolitic—if not unjust—treaty forced by Lord Curzon upon the Turks, who had lost in the Great War (1914-18). He sickened subsequently and died.

IX

NOT only did Rabindranath love India with an all-consuming devotion, but he was proud of her physical beauties, her fertility and bounteousness—proud even more so of the culture built up by slow degrees through the ages. Upon nearly every occasion that we conversed, he insisted that we had as much to give to the West as we stood in need of receiving from it—if not more. He wished the exchange to be made upon a basis of freedom and equality. He was ever striving to purge the relationship of patronage.

My acquaintance with thinkers and doers in the world has been extensive. No one have I met in any quarter of the globe to whom freedom meant more—or who was more willing—aye, eager—to make the greatest sacrifice for it. Had the need arisen for him to give his life for it, he, I have not the slightest doubt, would have gone blithely to the gallows.

And freedom to him was much more than political freedom. It meant also freedom from grinding poverty—cramping social canons—inhuman social customs. Throughout his life he radiated this message through speech, writing, and, above all, living.

*Before the end of my journey
May I reach within myself
The one which is the all,
leaving the outer shell
To float away with the drifting multitude
upon the current of chance and change.*

—RABINDRANATH TAGORE



"KONARK", SANTINIKETAN, 1926

Photo: Susti Banerjee

THE IMMORTAL BARD

THE death of Rabindranath Tagore is a terrible and irreparable loss not merely to Bengal and India but to humanity. One of those high and commanding spirits who arise from time to time to stir their generation with new mental and moral impulses, Rabindranath had long passed the stage when he could be said to belong exclusively to his own province and country, though both were immensely proud of him. Whether as a poet or as a man of letters or as a thinker of lofty thoughts he belonged to the whole world. His writings enriched not merely the literature of his province and of other Indian provinces, but the literature of the entire civilised world. There was hardly a language into which his works had not been translated in his life-time, and there was hardly a country known to civilisation where his name was not as well known and pronounced with as much veneration as that of any native oracle. This is a rare distinction in the case of all poets and men of letters. It is literally unique in the case of a poet and a man of letters belonging to a politically subject country, the conditions of which neither favour the growth of literary or artistic genius in its highest form nor are calculated to win for it that outside recognition which naturally comes to men of genius in free countries. But for his winning the Nobel Prize Rabindranath would not have had anything like the world-wide celebrity that he enjoyed during the last twenty-eight years of his life, and the winning of the Nobel Prize by him was due to a combination of circumstances, which was almost accidental. Many of his best poems and literary pieces had been composed and his name had become a house-hold word in his own province and in other Indian provinces long before he won the Nobel Prize, but the world knew neither him nor his works and was deprived of the benefit of his sublime thoughts and his inspiring teachings. This ignorance and deprivation was the penalty which the world paid for the crime of keeping one of the most gifted peoples in the world, with its unparalleled heritage of culture and civilisation, in a state of political thralldom.

BUT this thought is not for to-day, but for some other day. To-day along with millions of men in our coun-

By

KALINATH ROY

try and tens of thousands of men in other countries we mourn the passing away of a man to whom we, our country and humanity owe more than to any other living teacher and master of our race. The sorrow that we feel—our sense of grievous loss—is too fresh and too intimate to permit any other thought to take even momentary possession of our mind. Yet the fullness of our grief is softened by a certain greatness and solemnity in the event. Death in the case of a man whom the world would not willingly let die can always be said to be premature, but viewing things in their proper perspective one can safely say that the Poet has died full of years and of honours. Every hour and minute of the Poet's life for the sixty years of his productive period had been consecrated to the noblest purposes and filled with splendid achievements. If it is a cruel and painful thought that such richness of culture, a creative genius of such sublime excellence, such maturity of wisdom and experience, such passion for truth, for justice, for progress, for enlightenment and freedom is by a single stroke extinguished, we can still find some not unworthy solace in the knowledge that if the force has been spent it has been nobly spent in devoted and effective service to the country and to humanity.

THE first and most obvious thought on the passing away of this illustrious man is that if the world has, in the words of Mahatma Gandhi, lost in him the greatest poet of the age, India has lost in him not only the greatest poet and one of the foremost thinkers and men of letters produced by her in modern times but her first citizen. Without a doubt the most gifted member of the most cultured family in Bengal and India, his contributions to the thought, ideals and aspirations of modern India, whether in the realm of poetry, which was his special province, or in the wider realm of letters and art,

were literally unique. Bengal had produced other poets, some of whom had great vogue in their days, and at least one literary man who in his day had undoubtedly even greater ascendancy in his own province than the Poet could claim. But it is safe to say that not one of them ever exercised that potent influence over the thought and life of India as a whole that Rabindranath exercised for more than a quarter of a century. He was modern India's first national poet and man of letters and the first in this case was also the greatest who outdistanced all competitors.

But though poetry, literature and art were undoubtedly Rabindranath's first love, they did not absorb all his time and energy. The most puissant bookman of his time in India, no one knew better than he the intimate connection between literature and life. It has been said by one who was himself a man of letters of no mean pretensions that "the man who has never left the life of a recluse, drawing an income from the funds and living in a remote garden, constructing past, present and future out of his own consciousness, is not qualified either to lead mankind safely or to think on the course of human affairs correctly." Every page of Rabindranath has the bracing air of close and living contact with the world and its affairs. When Rabindranath flung away his Knighthood in spirited protest against the atrocities perpetrated in the Punjab in the days of Martial Law, there were not wanting men who thought that his action was out of tune with the detached position befitting a poet and literary man of his international reputation. Those who said this were as ignorant of the Poet's own past life as of the true mission of poetry and literature in the life of humanity. Take up any book that has profoundly moulded the thoughts and emotions or affected the destiny of man, and you are sure to find that the author of the book, however much he might seem to lead the life of a recluse, did in reality live full in the life of his fellow men. Without that he would not have had either that knowledge of human affairs or that sympathy with the joys and sorrows, the wishes, the cravings, the ideals and aspirations of mankind that alone could have made his literary productions the powers they were.

RABINDRANATH himself, it is hardly necessary to remind any one who knew him at all, had never lived the life of a recluse, but had always been in close and intimate contact with the life of the world. He threw himself heart and soul into the anti-partition-*cum*-Swadeshi movement which convulsed his province from end to end and indirectly and somewhat remotely the country as a whole in the early years of this century, and it is an open secret that he narrowly escaped the fate that befell so many of his countrymen in those dark and yet spacious days. By his poems of unsurpassable power and beauty, by his inspiring and soul-captivating national songs as well as by his speeches and essays, distinguished equally for their brilliant and penetrating analysis of the situation and for the many luminous and constructive suggestions they contained he rendered a service to the national movement as effective immediately as that rendered by the greatest political leaders and of far more enduring value. With certain aspects of the non-cooperation movement of a later day it was impossible for him, consistently with his life-long convictions and with that intellectual honesty which had always been among his unflinching characteristics, to sympathise, but to the national freedom movement led by the Mahatma, viewed both as an attempt to throw off India's political subjection and as an organised and sustained effort to get rid of the curse of untouchability, to promote inter-communal harmony and banish ignorance, illiteracy, insatiation and poverty, in a word to make India a strong, efficient, self-reliant and self-governing country, he lent his whole-hearted support.

THE friendship between Rabindranath and Mahatma Gandhi was, indeed, one of the most remarkable things in contemporary history. In several vital matters they differed widely from each other. Their fields of activity too were divergent. But this did not affect the cordiality of their relations. The Poet had unbounded affection and esteem for the Mahatma and the Mahatma never addressed him except as *Gurudev*. When the Mahatma undertook his historic fast unto death Rabindranath was among the first to rally to his side, and the Mahatma followed the minutest details of the Poet's life with loving veneration. How did all this come to be possible in an age in which the slightest difference in ideas or in practice tends to drive men apart? The answer is as simple as it is obvious. Both were

intensely unselfish and religious-minded, and the basic agreement between the pair was far greater than their disagreement in detail. If the Mahatma is the prophet of nationalism and humanity, Rabindranath had all his life been their poet. To oppression and tyranny, by whomsoever and in whatever manner practised, he was as formidable and relentless a foe as the Mahatma. Equally formidable and equally relentless was his opposition to imperialism in every shape and form, and particularly in the form of domination of one country or race over another. The strength and vigour with which he condemned the spirit of imperialist domination in his speeches and writings in the first decade of this century has seldom been equalled and never surpassed even by men who have made the winning of India's political independence the supreme mission of their life. The flinging away of his Knighthood was of a piece with all this, and represented no isolated episode in the life of the Poet. It was an inevitable manifestation of that love of freedom and hatred of injustice and oppression which breathes the breath of life in so many of the Poet's literary and artistic masterpieces. And it is a matter of common knowledge that during the twenty-two years that followed that spirited act the Poet never let slip a single opportunity of making similar protests and remonstrances against official measures and policies savouring of racial domination or arrogance. Some of those protests and remonstrances have become an imperishable part of our political history.

It was in recognition of all this, no less than on account of his commanding position in the world of thought and of letters and of the undeniable fact that he was one of the two men who more than any other represented India in the eyes of the world and who had undoubtedly raised its stature in the estimation of other countries, that the promoters of the Civil Liberties Union immediately and instinctively thought of the Poet when they looked round for a President for that body. No choice could have been better or more appropriate. For no man in India or abroad could have been more jealous of civil liberties and, indeed, of liberty itself in its highest and most commanding sense than the Poet. In this respect his ardour fully equalled that of Milton, that classic example of the impassioned championship of liberty among English poets.

GLOWING tributes have been paid not only in all parts of India but in Britain and America to the wonderful versatility of Rabindranath Tagore's genius and the profound influence he exercised on contemporary thought and life. Among those who have joined in these universal tributes are thinkers and men of letters of world-wide repute like Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells, British statesmen and officials like the Secretary of State for India, the Viceroy, the Commander-in-Chief, the Governor of Bengal, the Chief Justice of India and the Metropolitan of India, leading British journals like the *London Times* and leading American journals like the *New York Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune*. But for the war and the complete dislocation of normal life caused by it we have not the smallest doubt that continental Europe as well as Japan, China and Iran, all of which delighted to honour the Poet in his lifetime, would have joined in mourning the tremendous loss to humanity caused by his death.

In India there is hardly a public man of any eminence from Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Radha Krishnan, Mr. M. R. Jayakar, Mr. M. A. Jinnah, Mr. V. D. Savarkar, and the Premiers of Bengal and the Punjab downwards who has not paid his loving and reverential homage to the memory of one of the greatest Indians of all times. To a special category belongs the warm and eulogistic tribute paid to the greatness of the illustrious dead from his prison home by that noble son of India, whose gift of expression is equalled only by his transparent sincerity and his matchless love of country—Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. "Gurudev's passing away," says this high-souled patriot, "has left us all, who have grown up in the shadow of his towering genius and mighty personality and enveloped by his great tradition, forlorn and in the dark. India's greatest star, illuminating not only our own country but the world with a synthesis of the rich wisdom of the past and of the present, has set, and our hearts are empty. Yet his voice rings in our ears and the flaming message of his utterances will be our guiding star. In line with the great Indian sages of the past he has left us an imperishable inheritance and even at the moment of his passing away we think with pride and gratitude, with love and reverence of his magnificent life and its achievements. That precious inheritance we shall treasure." I venture to think that no individual tribute to his genius and achievements would have gone so much to the heart of the Poet if he had been

living to-day as this magnanimous tribute by one for whom he had unbounded love, in language worthy of his fame

versal expression of sorrow in India and abroad.

NOR is this spontaneous appreciation of the Poet's greatness and his splendid services to his country and to humanity, and the imperishable heritage he has left behind confined only to individuals. In his own province the Legislative Council, which was in session, was adjourned as a mark of respect to his memory. The High Court was closed for half a day. The Secretariat and other Government offices in Calcutta, the Corporation offices and numerous business houses and offices of the Indian Chamber of Commerce, the Muslim Chamber of Commerce, the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce and all their affiliated associations were closed. Under the orders of the Director of Public Instruction all educational institutions throughout Bengal were closed for a day on receipt of the sad news, while the Vice-Chancellor of the University placed wreaths on the bier, when it was passing the Senate House, on behalf of the Chancellor and the University. Assam was as deeply moved by the tragic news as Bengal and besides educational institutions all Government offices were closed in honour of the memory of the departed Poet. The Bombay Municipal Corporation adjourned without transacting any business, and the Lucknow University remained closed for the day after passing a condolence resolution. Delhi, as befitting its position as the capital of India, held no less than 24 meetings in one day to commemorate the loss sustained by India. In other Provinces the sorrow felt by the people is as sincere as in Bengal, Assam and Bombay, and has found powerful expression in the utterances of public men and in resolutions passed at public meetings. Even the Stock Exchanges in Bombay and Calcutta remained closed on receipt of the news of the Poet's death. As far as we can recollect at this moment on no previous occasion in history had the death of one who was pre-eminently a poet and a man of letters evoked such uni-

WHAT was the secret of this immense influence and this amazingly universal popularity of Rabindranath? It lay not merely in his superb poetical and literary genius and in the magnificent services he rendered by means of it to his country and to humanity over a period of more than fifty years, but in the comprehensiveness of his appeal in the fact that there is hardly a chord in our heart which he did not touch and hardly a corner in our mind which he did not illumine. Not only was he a lyrical poet, a composer and singer of national songs, a dramatist, a novelist, a storyteller, an essayist, a literary critic and a philosopher rolled into one, but in every one of these capacities he reached a standard of excellence which it had been given to but a few in any country or age to reach. Of his lyrical poetry, on which his fame and his title to immortality pre-eminently rests there is no need to say anything. It is enough to note that many of them have long become classical and form an abiding part of the world's standard literature. His dramas and novels are among the most widely read of all his works and have undoubtedly exercised a potent influence on contemporary thought both in his own province and in India as a whole. His short stories and his national songs are the best in the Bengali language and among the best in any language. His essays on political and social subjects and his philosophical dissertations will for all time take a high place among intellectual efforts of that kind. His criticisms and his satirical poems were distinguished at once by an analytical acumen, a spirit of discernment, a breadth of view, a high moral purpose and a finesse which made them a thing of tremendous power. Lastly and this is the most important part of the thing here was a man who wrote not merely for his own country and time, but for all countries and times and for men and women of all ages and in all their varied moods. He was at once a friend

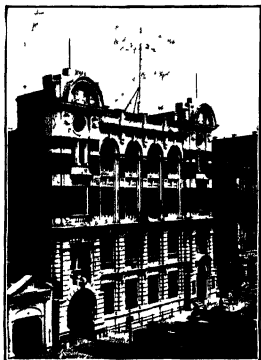
who amused and delighted us and an instructor and admonisher who sought to make us better than he found us, and he was one of the few poets and literary men to whom one could turn not only when one was in high spirits but when one's spirit was low and one sought relief from the world's manifold woes and worries.

AS for immortality, what immortality can be higher or more covetable than the immortality that is ensured to the Poet by his poetic and literary works, which will live as long as the literature they have enriched in so many directions, and by the lasting contributions he has made to the thoughts, the ideals and aspirations of his contemporaries and of generations yet unborn of his country and of humanity? Nor should we forget in this connection to make a passing reference to that unique educational institution at Santiniketan in and through which the poet's constructive and synthetic genius found its highest expression and to which he dedicated so many precious years of his life. Among his many titles to enduring fame the foundation of this great institution and the strenuous exertions he made in it to combine the highest learning and culture of the East with the highest learning and culture of the West will always have a commanding place. Who among us is more truly alive than the great men of the past whose thoughts we think, and to whom we owe all that we value most in life—country, freedom, peace, knowledge, art and literature? Who among us is more truly alive than the poets and philosophers, the men of letters and men of action who "toiled, endured, bled and died so that we by their labour might have rest, by their thoughts might know by their death might live happily? In us and through us and in and through countless generations of men and women these great men live and will continue to live. By his death Rabindranath has been finally admitted to this calendar of the world's immortals.

মৰিতে চাতি না আমি স্মৰণ ভূবনে,
মানবের মাঝে আমি বাঁচিবারে চাই,
এই সূর্য্যকবে এই পুষ্পিত কাননে
জীবন্ত হৃদয় মাঝে যদি স্থান পাই।

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বিবহ মিলন কত হাসিঅশ্রুময়,—
মানবের স্বপ্ন ছুঁখে গাঁথিয়া সঙ্গীত
যদি গো বচিতে পাবি অমর আলয়॥

—রবীন্দ্রনাথ



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Oils, Soft Soap, "Killem" Isocutide, "Balarene"
Disinfecting Fluid, "Antex" Wood Preservative

Our RABINDRANATH

THERE is an emptiness in every Indian heart and home to-day, an aching emptiness and an anguished gloom. A great and glorious light has gone out of our lives, a wondrous illumination. Rabindranath Tagore is no more; your Rabindranath, my Rabindranath, everybody's Rabindranath, Bengal's beloved Rabi Babu, India's revered 'Gurudev', the world-honoured Tagore is—dead. Our grief is unspeakable. We feel orphaned and forlorn.

It is difficult for us fully to realise yet that he is no longer with us in the flesh, that the magic of his physical presence, so stately and kindly and serene—beautiful as that of some fairy king whose sweet, soothing graciousness is the stanchless generosity of his soul—is to thrill and enthrall us no more, that the melody of his dream-laden voice is hushed now in the stillness of death. And the songs which poured out from him in quotidian, mellifluous profusion, songs which our cradle-old habit had beguiled us into expecting to be a never-ending flow, songs heavy with an ancient people's joys and yearnings and woes and religious hauntings, contextured with our common lot in life—are there to be for us no more new songs by him?

If we have become insatiable, it was he who made us so. For how many decades did he not heap upon us the treasures of his overflowing genius, unload argosies of mystery, vision, ecstasy, sympathy, ardour; in poetry, prose, drama, dance, song and noble practical endeavour—unceasingly to the last even while the Ultimate Shadow was closing upon the mortal part of him?

TO say that Rabindranath was a poet would be to say too little; he was a king of poets. With a master's spell of sound woven into ravishing sound he charmed open a magic casement upon a world of all-forgetting, all-remembering trance. And behold!—the Cosmic dance of Creation beneath the dissolving tread of Nataraj! Tagore, like Nietzsche, could not conceive a God who did not dance; the witchery of Urvashi, queen of the dancing-maidens of Heaven, who was not a mother, not a daughter, but the sum and essence of all feminine fascination, embarrassment-free, flashing upon Awareness apparitionally; the mad-glad sport of Life with Death, of Death with Life in the swinging, swinging ecstasy

By

ABANY C. BANERJEE

of "Jhulan"; Chitrangada's hungering passion of flesh and soul finding fulfilment in a single night of union, when flesh turns to soul and soul turns to flesh and Eternity is held in an hour: the lotus-dance of love's light rapture upon the radiant waters of youth, rapture blusful with private dreams, rapture the heart of whose fragrance yet sways with the glint of a tear, the tragic infatuation of a Dev-guru's daughter who scorns the wisdom of the gods and pines for the love of a man, and what is that proud swelling vision that goes floating down the stream, across the blurring rain, beneath the thunder-clouds? It is the Golden Boat gleaming with the riches, not of perfumed princes, but of perspiring peasants bulging yellow corn, sheaf upon groaning sheaf, Mother Earth's bounty from her breast. And hearken!—to the laughter of children sweeter than the laughter or the nectar of the gods; to the sighings and weepings of all life born; to the tidings of myriad-mooded Nature; to echoes from where no sounds are, from the other side of shadow-tossed Silence, from the Beyond, echoes caught by the grieving heart, like the sounds of the sea in a shell, in the stark vigil of the night. And witness!—how (as in the marvellous art of bygone China) "the winds of the air become our desires, the clouds our wandering thoughts, the lonely mountain-peaks our lofty aspirations and the torrents our liberated energies." It was, indeed, such poetry as should make the dead awaken.

HIS prose, like his poetry, was endowed with a matchless quality of magnificence, pathos, exquisitry. And he created a new language on the way. Common words, despised by the learned and the refined, received from his pen fresh values and an unimagined dignity; for to him words, however humble, were gems, were fairies, were pearls or tear-drops, were spindrifts trembling in the air, were Aeolian harp-strings, were sparks of flame. The common themes of life he touched with tenderness and grace, like

some butterfly poised on a blossom. The grand and lofty ones he handled with magistral power and passion. What marvels the sorcery of his art wrought with them all! The loveliness of our flowers (no less of such outcasts among them as the 'akanda' and 'jhinga' and the nameless wild ones of the wood than of the lotus their queen, slender as a vase and proud with centuries of memory-inheritance), the souging of our trees in the wind, the dappings of our sunlight on the grass, the hymnody of our rains, the beauty of our rippling streams, the turbulence of our mighty rivers and oceans, the majesty of our god-haunted mountains, the sultry uprush of our gorgeous dawns, the red surrender of our angry sunsets, our full moon's swooning light and delight, the maddening perfume of our mango-groves where we have sported and plucked and sported, these and the mysteries of birth and life and death, the smile on the face of the sleeping infant chased with hints of the Unknown, the wonder-wisdom of the child, the bitter-sweet attractions and distractions of the youthful, the crippling canons of social-dom, the hopes, fears, struggles, self-questionings and frustrations of our men and especially of our neglected women, shy shades of thought, elusive nuances of emotion, fugitive overtones of intuition—such things his genius caught and held in imperishable prose and unfolded before us with an enchanting sureness of touch. It was a touch sensitive and animating as that of some Chinese wizard of the brush like Ma Yuan unrolling a warm scroll, scene by beautiful scene, now gay, now grave now dizzy or infinitely sad.

IN drama, too, he was inimitable and supreme, whether as playwright or producer or actor. His art in each of these departments had the precision, subtlety and strength of art at its highest. In word, setting and gesture he expressed himself without waste, without false emphasis, without fear, plucking our heartstrings with his rhythms of sound and emotion. (Was it not Anna Pavlova, Empress of ballerinas, who described the play of Tagore's unforgettably beautiful hands as Music?) And into the texture of it all he wrought, with creative appropriateness, lovely songs and lovely dances. The songs, intimate and universal in their appeal, have passed into the familiarity of our daily lives; they have provided, not a

banquet for the esoteric few, but a festival for all

"That training", Rabindranath has taught us, "is the most intricate which leads to the utter simplicity of tune." Once he was past the growing pains of immaturity, there was about all that he wrote and said and did that simplicity which is the seal of superlative worth. This gave a nameless grace to his excellences. Late in life he unexpectedly adventured into the realm of pictorial art and what he accomplished there was truly astonishing. Without that "intricate training" in the technique of the pencil and the brush, he yet realised—with the intuitional antennae of his genius—a linear simplification, a bold but not indelicate directness of colour, and an economical ordonnance aquiver with emotional content such as others, even considerable artists, labouring and experimenting each for a life time, might envy. These pictures may be summarily described as the externalization of some of the experiences of an ever-alert spirit, experiences that were incommunicable except in line and colour.

RABINDRANATH was a man to whom nothing that was human could be alien. To us he was indeed, the high-priest of Life and Humanity. He saw Life whole and thrilled to it with the joy that is "the other side to strength". He touched Life everywhere and nowhere he touched but illumined it. Men are wise in proportion to their capacity for experience and to Rabindranath every experience was an adventure, every phenomenon a miracle. And the value of Life was revealed to him in the context of Universal Love, which taught the meaning of the word brother. They love not India who only India love. Rabindranath could love his India so proudly, he could love his Bengal so passionately, he could love his Bolpur so intimately—why?—because he loved all mankind so that to him "the whole world was a single nest." He was one of those rare beings who have stood sentry at the outposts of human consciousness guarding man's belief in man, he was one of those "watchers and warders" of Thomas Hardy who are

"In fair compassions skilled

Men of deep art in life-development

*who love truly the excellent
And make their daily lives a melody"*

RABINDRANATH was no prisoner of environmental enclosures, no thrall to the ancestral tyranny of the dead. He transcended the trammels of

inherited error with fortitude but without self-dramatization. He was a rebel who yet had his loyalties to the past and drew sustenance from it. The movement of his spirit may be likened to the growth of a tree which, while it clings with its roots to the sapful soil, yet rises away from it heavenwards in the light of the sun and in the spaciousness of the air. His mind and heart were ever young, moving joyfully forward with the hand of the world-clock. The 'fairy tales of science' kindled him to a serene excitement equally with the fairy tales of children where though the story was false, the meaning was the revelation of truth. Alert and agog for everything that made for "life-development" he was impatient of all that might render it frustrate—venerable falsehoods, crusted prejudices, vestigial survivals of outgrown systems and institutions—the bookful blockhead's 'loads of learned lumber', the unctuous recitatives of those for whom it was no struggle to be righteous, the mummeries of empty rituals, the exploitation of man by man and of woman by man. He heard the sigh of the oppressed and sorrow welled out from him in an impassioned pearl. He stooped in active, caressive sympathy and concern to the wretchedness of those 'dead men living', India's countless villagers, and his heart bled for their alphabetic, huddled, famishing, crawling lives. He was a true patriot, the secret of whose patriotism was the realization that 'Patriotism was not enough', for his patriotism was a part of his rebellion against evil, as that rebellion was integrally related to his humanity. Nor to him was liberty enough. Without reference to 'life-development', it would be just a changing of prisons, he knew. Wherever he found life-developing processes active, how he rejoiced! Witness his enthusiasm for what he saw in Soviet Russia. On the other hand, his challenging indignation against the embattled hosts of exploitation, violence and destruction, masquerading as Civilization in the West to-day—how intrepid, inspiring and wise! Listen to some of the words of one of his last utterances:

Violence stands forth
with drawn sword among the order-

ed ways of love. It tests them without mercy. In this strife of values everything is broken, scattered, torn to shreds. To things built up with painstaking care it shows no respect, but tramples them wantonly under foot.

So the mind must needs question: What is the true purpose of this great order of creation? Is the end of its dervish dance of violence merely the ashes of the mighty funeral pyre on some blood-stained field of Kurukshetra?

If this is the final purpose of creation, in what uncreated emptiness is man's imagination to seek its Heaven?

RABINDRANATH was no mere builder of castles in the air, no mere philosopher perpendingly pondering the verities in the ineffectualness of an arm-chair. He shut himself up in no garden of thought or elysium of fancy or secluded sanctum, but went forth into the highways and thoroughfares of life and became a practical builder with dreams, a master-builder. What till about forty years ago had been his saintly father's hermitage, "far from the madding crowd", is to-day the happy, humming meeting-place of the many varied creative forces of the world from North, South, East and West. It is at once the nursery and the treasure-house of different arts and crafts, of science and international scholarship, of culture, agriculture and the artisan's industry. Rabindranath has built, forsooth, at Bolpur a house where there are many mansions.

CAN it be that thou art no longer with us, Master? Thou hast not died, surely, "thou wast not born for death." Thou hast but passed in pilgrimage from thy span of four-score mortal years to a Hush that holds thee now as a permanent splendour in the life of our race, lifted above the dust of Time. 'PRANAM'—we cry to thee in bended obeisance with the inaudible cry of our gathered-up souls. 'PRANAM GURUDEV, PRANAM'.

পেয়েছি ছুটি বিদায় দেহ ভাই

সবারে আমি প্রশাম করে যাই

কিরায়ে দিচ্ছ ঘরের চাঁদ

রাখিনে আর কাহাবো দাবী

সবারি আমি প্রসাদবাণী চাই #

AN INSPIRATION TO MANKIND

By

MUHAMMAD AZIZUL HAQUE

RABINDRANATH is no more in our midst. He has now freed himself from the fetters of illusion and has passed into the Infinite, where neither human language nor imagination can reach and the people of Bengal the V.sva-Bharati the University, nay the whole of India is swept away by the tide of an inconsolable grief. We do not know how far words can express this ache of our heart. Whatever we might say would but faintly express the feelings of our innermost soul.

Our mind now goes back to the time when the great Queen Victoria had made her memorable proclamation and assumed the administration of India. The Sepoy Mutiny had just been put down the regime of John Company was at its end. It was a great turning point in the history of India. A century had rolled away after the fateful defeat of Sraraj in the Plassey. This period had seen many great changes in the social life of Bengal. The same land was farmed out again and again on the plea of collecting revenue. The old system of land-tenure had practically collapsed. Innumerable rent-free holdings had been confiscated in absence of legal documents to prove ownership. The money-lender reduced the debtor to abject penury by compelling him to pay interest at a compound rate with the help of law. Rural administration the social ties public opinion became weaker and weaker. Railway lines were being laid all over the country. Telegraph posts stretched from the Himalayas to the Cape Cornou across numerous hills and other barriers. The medieval age was at an end and the modern ushered in.

In that critical hour of our history was born Rabindranath on 7th May, 1861. The heart of Calcutta was not yet paved with stones, the smoke of the chimney had not yet blackened the face of the sky and oil lamps were lighted in the evening.

This is the story of a vanished age. During these eighty years Indian life has undergone many transformations through a long process of intricate evolution. A citizen of the old world Rabindranath lived to know the new. He has closely studied and interpreted both the ages he has revealed to us the innermost spirit and has embodied it in poetry prose and painting. He has voiced the deepest sentiments that throbs in the heart of the nation and stirred his people by his inspired message. He has proclaimed in the clearest accents the true ideal of his country the poet has laughed wept, sung. He has made the ideal real brought truth into the light of day. The high priest of revolution he also condemned the ugly excesses of hysteric enthusiasm. He has in all his utterances but written the history of his society and country. If by a sudden cataclysm all the historical data for these eighty years be swept away we shall be able to reconstruct the history of that period from the writings of Rabindranath.

THE genius of Rabindranath is today radiating throughout the world. The litterateur the philosopher, the historian, the sociologist have studied his genius from various angles. In the village common, on the banks of river, on the sea-shore, in the loneliness of the wood, and in the crowded thoroughfares on the river-ferry or in the plain, in the market-place everywhere his poetry prevails. The child, the adult, the young, the old the poor and the destitute, have all found in his works a joy and an inspiration. He has given expression in his poetry to the aspirations of his countrymen their sorrows and their hopes. Today the work of Rabindranath is the most precious possession of Bengal. He has been given the highest place of honour in the world's literature the world has acclaimed him as her greatest man.

The poetic impulse came to him in the midst of the din and bustle of the crowd. When the matin rays of the Sun quickened his heart, he cried—

“চা'রদিকে মোর
পাশাপাশে রচিত কাত্যগার বোর
বৃক্কের উপরে আঁগার বসিয়া
করিছে নিব্বের ধ্যান।”

*There are iron bars all around me
and on my breast is a brooding darkness*

But the awakened heart wants to break through the fastnesses of ignorance the stone walls of inertia and desires to abandon himself to sunshine and laughter, like the anxious wild waves of the sea he wants to sweep over the world with melody.

“অগাধ বাসনা অসীম আশা
জগৎ দেখিতে চাই”

*With infinite desire and hope do I
want to see the world*

It is this wistful desire for the infinite which

“পাথান বাঁধন টুটি
ভিঙায়ে কতিন ধরা,
বনেরে জ্বাল কবি,
ফুলেরে ফুটায় বশা।”

*breaks through the hard granite
and softens the earth, which makes the
woods green and flowers blossom*

He wants to pour out the feelings of his heart. His desires to move through the limitless spaces of the infinite with the ecstasy of an emancipated spirit. He then firmly resolves to fight his way to his ideal—

“কিবে নেব বশিষিতার,
বিরে নেব সন্ধ্যা আর উষা,
পৃথিবীর জ্বাল যৌন,
কাননের দুলমর ভূগা।
কিরে নেব হাফানে সপৌত,
কিরে নেব যুতের জীবন,
জগতের ললাট হইতে
আঁগার কবির প্রশানন”

*I will bring back the sun and the
moon and the stars, I will restore the
green youth of the earth and the
blossoms of the woods. I will sing
again the songs that were lost and will
give life to the dead. I will dispel the
darkness from the face of the earth.*

He has in him a longing for the unknown and the distant, the land of his heart's desire—

“সুদূর সমুদ্রে গিয়া
সে প্রাণ নিশাথ, আর সে গান কবির শেষ”

*I will go to the distant sea and
there pour out my life and end my song*

He now wants to pierce through the frontiers of physicality, to storm the prison-house of the soul

"আমি ভাঙিব পাশাণ-কারা
আমি জগৎ প্রাণিহা
বেড়াব গাধিয়া
আত্ম পাপলপারা।"

I will break the prison bars, and I will sweep over the world with my wild and ecstatic melody

He is fearless, and is sure of the victory of his spirit

"মাতিয়া যখন উঠিছে পরাণ,
কিসের আধার, কিসের পাশাণ
উল্লিখ যখন উঠিছে বাসনা
জগৎ কিসের ডর?"

"ভাঙে রবে কলম ভাঙে রবে বাঁধন
সাবরে আঞ্জিক প্রাণের সাধন
লহরীর পর লহরী তুলিয়া
আঘাতের পর আঘাত কর,"

"এবে চারিদিকে মোর
এ কী কাব্যগার ঘোর।
ভাঙ ভাঙ ভাঙ কাগ, কাগ,
আঘাতে আঘাত কর।
গুরে আঙ্গ কী গান গেয়েছ পাখি
এয়েছে রবির কব।"

*When the heart is once awakened it fears not darkness and bondage, when the desire is once kindled the mind is not daunted by anything in the world
Break asunder the chains, fulfil the desires of the heart*

This indomitable optimism of the mind today inspires the whole nation and will one day bring about the consummation of our spiritual life. The Poet had his moments of depression and doubt

"পুরব আকাশ হতে উঠিব উজ্জ্বল
পশ্চিমবতে হঠাৎ বিপিন।"

The impulse will rise from the eastern sky and will dissolve itself in the west

But no one knows where the pilgrim age of the soul will end

"জগতের মাঝে পান, সেই সাগরের তলে
রচিত হতেছে পলে পলে
অনন্ত জীবন যথাদেপ,
কে জানে হবে কি তাহা শেষ।"

In the midst of the universe in the depths of the seas is being built moment by moment the eternal continent of man's desire. Who knows if it will ever be completed?

But he soon recovers from this despair and realises the eternity of the human spirit

"যে প্রাণ অনন্ত যুগ হবে
দে প্রাণ পেয়েছে নূন।"

The life that will abide for ever now vibrates with its own youth

He is not eager to know the finale of the universal process. Perhaps it will end in

"ছন্দোমুক্ত জগতের উন্নত আনন্দ-
কোলাহলে,"

The tumult of wild joy in a world freed from the chains of its own harmony

or

"স্থানবর্জ্য সৃষ্টিগুণের।"

*In the destruction of the universe
Perhaps the universe will one day burn in a mighty conflagration*

"স্বাভাবের অনন্ত কলম—
অগ্নি, অগ্নি, শুধু অগ্নিময়।"

The eternal essence of all existence has only fire

It is this ideal which the poet holds before his countrymen. In the light of the dawn the poet leaps into the eternal current of time and harkens to the mighty symphony of earthly voices. On the way there are innumerable difficulties and obstructions but they rather make the joy of life more intense

"জগৎ হয়ে রব আমি
একল। ব'ধ না,
মরিয়া যাটব এরা হলো
একটা জলকণা।"

*I will not remain alone. I will be at one with the universe
The poet does not desire to tread the path of death*

"আমার নহি তৃপ্ত দুগ
পরে পান চাই
যাহার পানে চেয়ে দেখি
তাহা হই হয়ে যাই।
তপন ভাষে, তার ভাষা,
আমিও যাহ ভাষে,
তাহার পান আমার পান,
যোতভি এষ দেশে।"

"চারিদিকে সে চাতিতে চায়,
তাহার মাঝে শরির গায়
আপন মন পাতিতে চায়।
মেঘের মত হরাৎ দিশা
আকাশ মাঝে ভাসিতে চায়।"

I mind not joy or sorrow. I only look at the universe. I become what I see. I dance through the universe like the sun and the stars, they music is my music and we are bound for the same goal

The radiance of the morning sun first revealed to him a true picture of his motherland

"চারিদিকে সোনার ধান ফলেছে"
"নীল আকাশতে নারিকেল তরু—
বৌর বীর তার পাতা নড়ে,
প্রভাত আলোত কুঁড়ে ঘরগুলি
জলে ঢেউগুলি গুঁতে পড়ে"

There is a golden harvest all around

He felt the pulse of rural Bengal.

"কেহবা হোলায়, কেহবা নোলে,
গাছতলে মিলে করে খেলা,
বাঁশ হাতে নিয়ে রাখাল বালক
কেহ নাচে গায়, করে খেলা।"

Some are reeling and some are rocked and they play around the fires. The cowboy pipes his flute; they dance and play

But he also felt the miseries of deserted villages

"চারিদিকে কেহ নাই, একা ভাঙাবাড়ি
সন্ধোবেলা ছায়ে বসে ডাকিতেছে কাক,
নিবিড় আঁধার, মুখ বাড়িয়ে র'য়ছ,
খোঁ খোঁ আছে ভাঙা ভাঙা প্রাচীরের কঁক।
পড়েছে সন্ধ্যার ছায়া অশখের গাছে,
থেকে থেকে শাখা তার উঠিছে নড়িয়া,
শুধু শুধু দীর্ঘ এক দেবদাল তরু
হেলিয়া ভিত্তির পরে রয়েছে পড়িয়া।"

It is all desolation and loneliness and in the evening the broken parapets are crowded with ominous crows

IN the next phase of the spiritual history of his life, the landscape of the earth began to be revealed to his eager inquisitive mind in fragments as in a panorama

"এক কালে বিশ ঘন ছিলরে বৃহৎ,
তখন মাড়র ছিল মাড়র মতো,
আজ যেন এরা সব ছোট হয়ে গেছে"

There was a time when the universe was a vast existence inhabited by types of great humanity now extinct. Now I only see pigmies all around

He then saw the sordid state of village life. He was shocked by the squabbles of the narrow-minded villagers. The villagers are busily engaged in ruining their neighbours, in driving them away from the village in ignominy and shame. The pundit is busy with futile disquisitions on empty problems. Religion degenerates into silly polemics and harmful superstitions. The poor and the starving are writhing in thirst and are driven away from the gates of a heartless aristocracy. He hears the delectful cry of the hungry and the destitute. The earth is full of rich harvest still the people starve. The poet cries,

"কেন দুগ, কেন পীড়া, কেন এ ক্রন্দন
অত্যাচার, উৎপীড়ন, মর্যাদা বিচার,
কেন এ সকল? কেন মাড়র 'পরে
মাড়র এত উপদ্রব? উন্মাদের
ক্লম তৃপ্ত, ক্লম শাণ্ডিল্য তার 'পরে
সবলের সেন্দূপ কেন।"

Why this sorrow, this sickness, this ceaseless, this grievous oppression and injustice—Why all these? Why this greedy eye of the mighty on the weak?

In the midst of this cruel indifference he becomes hopeless and despondent

"লৌহ পক্ষর মাঝে বন্দি বন্দি
আকাশের পানে চেয়ে ফেলি নিঃশাস
তবে কিরে আর কিছু নাহি উদাস ?"

I will look at the sky from my iron cage and brood over the miseries that cannot be redeemed

At the end of the poem the poet realises that in love lies our salvation

“ভালবেসে চাইব—

এ ভগতের পানে,

তবে তো দেখিতে পাবে

ব্রহ্ম ইহার।”

I will look at the universe with love, with love only we can understand the meaning of creation

This is the history of the unfoldment of the poet's mind

His initiation into this spiritual life is consecrated by the radiant rays of the morning sun and he enters the society of man with a large hope about the future of the world. I am not competent to assess the literary value of Rabindranath's poetry. But I feel that Rabindranath is a creator in literature that he has expressed the infinite through the finite, and that he has analysed human nature in all its aspects

I do not propose to discuss the poetry of Rabindranath in its aesthetic and metaphysical bearings. I only want to emphasise one particular aspect of the poet's mind—i.e., the patriotism of the poet, his deep love for his country

The country is not with him a mere abstraction or a fancy. It is to him a living personality. In his poetry and prose he has written the inner history of his country. But his patriotism is free from the taint of narrow parochialism. He has placed his love of mankind above all local attachments

“জগৎ জুড়িয়া এক জাতি সবে,

সে জাতির নাম মানব জাতি”

There is only race in the world that is the human race

Not long ago India was almost lifeless, in a world awakened to a new life vibrant with new hope. In those days of suicidal inertia the poet beckoned his countrymen to the path of that mighty progress and inspired them with the song

“আগে চল, আগে চল, ভাই।

প'ড়ে থাকা পিছে, ম'রে থাকা মিছে।

বেচে ম'রে কী বা ফল ভাই।”

আগে চল, আগে চল, ভাই।”

March forward it is death to lag behind

“পিছিয়ে যে আছে তা'রে ডেকে নাও,

নিয়ে যাও সাথে ক'রে

বেহু নাহি আসে, একা চ'লে যাও

মহত্ত্বের পথ ধ'রে।”

Call them who lag behind and take them with you And when they do not come, go alone through the path of sacrifice

He wanted us to hold fast to our highest ideal—

“পাড়া দেখি তোরা আশ্রয় প'র ভুলি

হৃদয়ে হৃদয়ে ছুটুক বিহুলা,

প্রভাত পগনে কোটি শির ভুলি

নির্ভয়ে আজি গাহো রে।”

Stand united my countrymen in love and hope Read the morning sky with the pealing of your anthem

He has discovered for us the grandeur and sublimity of Mother India

“শীল-সিন্ধু জল-বৌত-চরণতল,

অনিদ-বিবশ্পিত-স্নানমল অঞ্চল

অঙ্গুর চুপিত-ভাল-চিমাচল

তবু তুমার-বিশিষ্টিনী।”

Thy feet are washed by the waters of the blue ocean thy green skirts are flowing in the air Thy kisses the forehead of the Himalaya and the white snow is your crown

He wanted his nation to be quickened to a new life, to be inspired by a high ideal

“দৈন্তের মাঝে আছে তব ধন,

মৌনের মাঝে বয়েছে গোপন,

তোমারি মন্থ অগ্নিবচন

তাই আমাদের দিয়ে।

পরের সজ্জা ফেলিয়া পবিত্র

তোমার উত্তরীণ”

Enter into us the treasure hidden under our miseries let the simple gift from you replace the luxury from beyond

Then a day came when the whole of Bengal was shaking as in a great storm

The Poet then sang the glory of his motherland in words which inspired his countrymen with a new hope

“আমার সোনার বাংলা, আমি তোমায়

ভালবাসি

চিবিদন তোমার আকাশ, তোমার বাতাস

আমার প্রাণে বাজায় বাঁশি।

ও মা, ফাগুনে তোর আমের বনে

জাপে পাগল করে

ও মা, অজ্ঞানে তোর ভরা দোহে

কী দেখেছি মধব হাসি।”

My Golden Bengal I love thee, my heart echoes the music of your sky and your air My mother, the sweet fragrance of thy mango blossoms makes me mad My mother what a lovely smile in the plenty of thy cornfields!

He inspired his nation with the ideal of freedom and self-sacrifice. He addressed his countrymen, he warned them. He said—

“আমার স্বদেশ, আমার চিরন্তন

স্বদেশ, আমার পিতৃ-পিতামহের স্বদেশ,

আমার সন্তান-সন্ততিব স্বদেশ, আমার

প্রাণদাতা শক্তিদাতা সম্পদদাতা স্বদেশ।

...যে পথ কঠিন, যে পথ কটক-সঙ্কল, সেই পথে বাত্মার জন্ত প্রস্তুত হইয়াছি। আজ বাত্মারন্ত্রে এখনো মেঘের গর্জন শোনা যায় নাই বলিয়া সমস্তটাকে ঘেন খেলা বলিয়া মনে না করি। যদি বিদ্রোহ চকিত হইতে থাকে, বস্ত্র ধ্বনিত হইয়া উঠে, তবে তোমরা কিরিয়ো না কিরিয়ো না, দুর্বাগের রক্তচক্ষুকে ভয় করিয়া তোমাদের পৌরুষকে জগৎ-সমক্ষে অপমানিত করিয়ো না। বাংগার সন্তানবন জানিয়াই চলিতে হইবে, দুঃখকে স্বীকার করিয়াই অগ্রসর হইতে হইবে। অতি বিবেচকদের ভীত পরামর্শে নিজেদের দুর্বল করিয়ো না। যখন বিবাতার ঝড় আসে, বজা আসে, তখন সংঘত বেশে আসে না, কিন্তু প্রয়োজন বলিয়াই আসে, তা'লে ভাল-মন্দ লাভ-ক্ষতি দুইই নাইয়া আসে।”

My country that is for ever thine the country of my fore fathers the country of my children my country which has given me life and strength We have prepared for a journey through the hard thorny path of life The absence of thunder and storm at the beginning should not delude us into thinking that this is all play If it ignites and threatens do not rebel, do not humiliate yourself in the act of the coward by yielding to danger Do not allow yourself to be cowed by the timid counsel of over-cautious men When the storm comes it comes not slowly or mildly It comes as a necessity, as a prelude, to a great benediction

So the poet resolves to be intrepid and buoyant

“আমি ভয় করবো না,

ভয় করবো না

দুবেলা মরার আগে

মরবো না ভাই মরবো না।

তরীখানা বাইতে গেলে

মাঝে মাঝে তুফান মেলে

তাই বলে হাল ছেড়ে দিয়ে

কান্নাকাটি ধরবো না।”

I will not be afraid, when the tempest comes I will not give up hope

The poet ardently prays for the fulfilment of the aspirations of Bengal

“বাংলাব মাটি, বাংলার জল,

বাংলার বায়ু, বাংলার ফল,

পুণ্য হউক, পুণ্য হউক,

দে ভগবান।

বাঙালীর পণ, বাঙালীর আশা,

বাঙালীর কাজ, বাঙালীর ভাষা,

সত্য হউক, সত্য হউক”

Blessed be Bengal, blessed be everything in it

RABINDRANATH has not only seen the physical beauty of his country he has realised also the spiritual significance of India. "India has a definite contribution to make to the world culture."

"ভাবতবর্ষের প্রধান সার্থকতা কী, এ কথাই উত্তর যদি কেহ জিজ্ঞাসা করেন, সে উত্তর আছে। ভারতবর্ষের ইতিহাস সেই উত্তরকেই সমর্থন করিবে। ভাবতবর্ষের চিরদিনই এক-মাত্র চেষ্টা দেখিতেছি, প্রভেদের মধ্যে একত্র স্থাপন করা, নানা পথকে একই লক্ষ্যের অভিমুখীন করিয়া দেওয়া এবং বহুই মধ্যে এককে নিঃসংপরূপে অন্তর-তরুণে উপলব্ধি করা—বাহিবে যে সকল পার্থক্য প্রতীয়মান হয়, তাহাকে 'নই না করিয়া' তাহার ভিতরকার নিগূঢ় যোগকে অধিকার করা।"

"পরস্পরের প্রতি আমাদের দাবী আছে। আমাদের সমাজের পঠন-সেইরূপ। আমাদের সমাজ যে ধনী সে দান করিবে, যে গৃহী সে আতিথ্য করিবে, যে জ্ঞানী সে অধ্যাপনা করিবে, যে জ্যোতি সে পালন করিবে, যে কঠিন সে সেবা করিবে। ইহাই বিধান। পরস্পরের দাবীতে আমরা পরস্পর বাধ্য। ইহাই আমরা মঙ্গল বলিয়া জানি। প্রাণী যদি ফিরিয়া যায় তবে ধনীর পক্ষেই তাহা অসম্ভব, অতিথি যদি ফিরিয়া যায় তবে গৃহীর পক্ষেই তাহা অকল্যাণ। শুভকর্মে কাম্যকর্তার পক্ষেই শুভ।"

"The one ideal of India is the quest of unity in diversity; to discover the inner unity of things without denying their outward differences."

"The Indian society is based on a system of reciprocal claims. In our society the rich shall make gifts, the householder will receive guests, the learned will impart education, the old will protect, the young will serve them in return."

Untainted by any petty parochialism his patriotism is conceived on a lofty

human ideal. He recognized the universality and the rich variety of Indian culture as the natural result of the blending of diverse races that have embraced this country as their home

"কেহ নাহি জানে কার আস্থানে
কত মানুষের ধারা

চুকায় শ্রোতে এলো কোথা হতে
সমুদ্রে হোলো হারা।

হেথায় আশা, থেথা অনাশ্রা,
হেথায় সবিড় চাঁন

শক চন দল পাতান মোগল
এক দেহে হল লীন।"

Various flocks of humanity converged on India to make it a great nation. The Aryan and the non-Aryan, the Dravidian and the Mongol, the Pathan and the Moghul met here in a unique unity.

This is the true nature of the Indian nation, and Rabindranath realised that the liberation of India depends on the recognition of this inclusive and integral character of Indian humanity. This great ideal brings him to the vision of an India that inspires love and humanity

"উত্তরে হিমালয়ের পাদমূল হইতে
দক্ষিণে তবঙ্গমুখ সমুদ্রকূল পর্যন্ত নদী-
জালজড়িত পূর্ব-সীমান্ত হইতে শৈলমালা-
বন্ধুব পশ্চিম-প্রান্ত পর্যন্ত চিত্তকে
প্রসারিত বসে। যে চাষী চাষ করিয়া
এতক্ষেণ ঘবে ফিরিয়াছে তাহাকে সন্তাষণ
করে, যে রাপাল খেতদলকে গোষ্ঠগৃহে
এতক্ষেণ ফিরাইয়া আনিয়াছে তাহাকে
সন্তাষণ করে, শঙ্খমুখরিত দেবালয়ে যে
পূজারী আগত হইয়াছে, তাহাকে সন্তাষণ
করে, অন্তঃস্থের দিকে মুখ ফিরাইয়া যে
মূলমানব নামাজ পড়িয়া উঠিয়াছে, তাহাকে
সন্তাষণ করে। আজ সাধারণ গৃহ্যর
শাশা-প্রাণা বাহিয়া ব্রহ্মপুত্রের কূল
উপকূল দিয়া একবার বাংলাদেশের পূর্বে
পশ্চিমে আপন অন্তরের আলিঙ্গন বিস্তার
করিয়া দাঁড়, আজ বাংলাদেশের সমস্ত
ছায়া-তুকনিবিড় গ্রামগুলির উপরে

এতক্ষেণ বে শারদ আকাশে একাক্ষরী
চন্দ্রমার জ্যোৎস্নাধারা অশ্রু ঢালিয়া
দিয়াছে সেই নিতম্ব গুচিকচির সন্ধ্যাকালে
তোমাদের সম্মিলিত হৃদয়ের গীতিকবিতা
একপ্রান্ত হইতে আর এক প্রান্তে
পরিব্যাপ্ত হইয়া যাক।"

"Go and speak to the plough-man as he returns from his field; to the cowboy when he drives home his herd; to the devotee as he comes to the temple of his God that responds to the blessing of the couch-shell; to the Mussalman when he stands facing the sunset and says his prayers.... Let the evening sky echo the song of your united voices."

In his early days the poet once sang.

"যেথায় হাবানো গান

যেথায় হারানো হাসি

যেথা আছে বিস্তৃত স্বপন,

সেইখানে সন্ধান

রেখে দিস গানগুলি

রচো নিস সমাধিঘর।"

Preserve my songs in that region where all songs fly; Let my poetry be my only memorial."

To-day the songs of Rabindranath have spread over the universe.

Rabindranath has left the world, but he is not dead. He is with the immortals—Valmiki, Kalidas, Shakespeare, Firdousi and Iqbal!

Still we feel that we have lost something, something very precious has vanished from our sight. We cannot say how we shall express our love for the departed great.

This University has resolved to do its best to keep Visva-Bharati, the great creation of the poet, alive. What the poet has given to Bengal, to India, to the world in various way, for over half a century will ever remain a source of life and inspiration to mankind. To-day he is freed from the bondage of mortality and has passed into a region where death is not known.

—Adapted and translated from the Bengali address of the Vice-Chancellor at the Memorial Meeting held under the auspices of Calcutta University—by Rabindra Kumar Das Gupta, Post-Graduate Department, Calcutta University

He is there where the tiller
is tilling the hard ground
and where the pathmaker
is breaking stones.
He is with them in sun and
in shower, and his garment
is covered with dust . . .

—GITANJALI

The Legacy for TO-MORROW

By

NIKHIL CHAKRAVARTY

I

LENIN once asked a group of Soviet students as to whom they regarded as the greatest literary figure of Russia. "Mayakovsky", they replied. "Yes, but what about Pushkin?" asked Lenin, and added, "Could there have been a Mayakovsky without a Pushkin?" A hundred years from to-day the people would speak of Tagore in the same way and with more truth. At the moment we are too near to his personality to fully appraise its greatness. You cannot size up a Titan when you stand next to him. Tagore cannot be measured by our standards, nor can we comprehend the infinite variety of manifestations in which his genius has taken form. He was not a personality, nor an institution, he was an epoch. He was as much the product of an age as the age was his product.

On the changing face of India, personalities come and go in rapid succession. The leader of yesterday is discarded to-day, and the hero of to-day slips into oblivion to-morrow. That is not the fault of the nation nor of those who play these fleeting roles. We in India are in the ferment of a dynamic world, the giant is awake, the unchanging East has stirred. But even at this quick Tempo, Tagore tried to keep pace with the times. He was never a back number.

But he was a progressive in more ways than one. On the one hand, he broke away from traditions—in language, music, painting and religion: on the other, he never lost touch with the vital currents of the day, absorbing within his receptive mind all the new ideas and thoughts of his age. A scientific study of the last fifty years would no doubt recognise in him the Pole Star of our national culture.

II

CONSIDER the invaluable legacy that he has left behind. Bengal has had a veritable Age of Tagore. In language,

he destroyed the traditional fetters of old Bengali. Take away Tagore and we at once fall back with a thud upon Iswar Gupta, with perhaps the exception of Michael, as our immediate poetic heritage. The hide-bound code of traditional technique had to give way before this wizard of words. He enriched our language with a diction that is at once supple and powerful. This has been a great achievement—a technical revolution—not only for having made the language more elastic and expressive, but also for having destroyed, from the point of view of future progress, the germs that were ossifying our medium of expression. He narrowed the gulf between the spoken and the written tongue, between the language of the man in the street and that of the learned scribe. Bengali has become a living language, ready to welcome new forms and expressions which future generations will bring along with them.

When the common man comes to inherit the culture that is to-day the monopoly of the few, he will have to battle against the age-old conventions of language to make it the true vehicle of his own expression. Tagore played the historic role of making the first assault in this war against outworn literary conventions. The language that he created is now ready to adjust and expand itself to suit the needs of its veterans of to-morrow.

In music and painting too, he played a similar significant role. He tried to give new forms, though never totally rejecting the content of the classical tradition. He realised that no art-form could ever be permanent. A living culture though retaining all that is best in human values would express itself through new forms in every age. That is one of the reasons why the generation that has come in his wake has been so creative in its output. Not only the men of to-day, but the men of to-morrow too, will pay their tribute to his greatness, for he made our language,

painting and music free from the shackles of the past and at the same time set up a new tradition of innovations and experiments.

Technical perfection by itself does not exhaust his great gifts to our culture. The literature that we inherit from him is stupendous in both volume and quantity. To have reaped so much and reaped so richly has seldom come the way of an individual mind. His poetry has given voice to almost all our varied emotions and experiences. Our joys and sorrows, our hopes and frustrations—as individuals or in the collective—find echo in Tagore's writings. He never lost touch with life and recognised that life is always on the move. The poet too moved forward with it, and not backward. He was not afraid to face realities, and that is why he soon discarded the escapist trends like symbolism with which he experimented in the days of *Phalguni*. Never since the age of Dante has the culture of a generation been epitomised so completely in one man.

Tagore's religion is of no little interest to progressives. He never tried to reduce his idea of values to fixed categories. His God is not the Miltonic Taskmaster, a dispenser of Right and Wrong, nor does He speak in terms of Good and Evil. The Poet created his own God as the God of Beauty. For him, evil is bad because it is ugly, truth is good because it is beautiful. An idealist he no doubt was—for religion itself was the product of idealism—but an idealist of the highest order. Here is a mind freed from the stifling narrowness of a rigid code. It would not be wrong to say that he was never affiliated strictly to any organised religion. He appreciated much that is beautiful in different religious forms. Personal ties might have kept him within a particular fold. But he was no believer in dogmas and ceremonials. To him religion was mostly personal. Born in a country where feudal conceptions of religion still dictate the standards of behaviour, Tagore had the liberality of a mind that seeks after a freer horizon. He played the same role as did the Humanists in Europe in destroying the foundations of a dogmatic religion. Though still confined within the limits of idealism, however beautiful in form, he brought us out of the narrow grooves of orthodoxy. A creed such as Tagore's marks a distinct stage in the evolution of a freer mind.

III

THE age of Tagore forms one of the significant chapters of our national

history. It relates the story of the rise and fall of a colonial bourgeoisie. This is the period when the Indian middle class came into the political field leading the whole nation against the foreign rule. In the common struggle for freedom the interest of the middle class converged with that of the common people upto a certain point. 1905 was the turning point when the middle class came into the arena of the mass movement, and the climax of this alliance began in 1920. Placed at the vantage point of the movement, the middle class called halt whenever their own leadership appeared to be in jeopardy. This was what happened after the 1920 and the 1930 Civil Disobedience movements, and this is exactly what has been happening for the last two years when the fear of organised masses has kept the national bourgeoisie in a state of coma. Viewed from this perspective the bourgeoisie in a colonial country has certainly a progressive role to play, though the potentialities of that role are being more and more exhausted as the masses are coming to the forefront, and, externally, as the general crisis of the whole capitalist system deepens.

The reflection of this relation of class forces upon the cultural front is clear and unmistakable. With the first stirrings of national consciousness, our writers and poets achieved almost a renaissance and Tagore was its high-priest. The 1905 movement shook off his complacency and he began to take an active interest in the burning topics of the day. Through his songs and poems he inspired the nation, but he went further. His pen became merciless in the denunciation of Imperialism, and in course of his numerous tours abroad, his speeches were equally uncompromising. At Santiniketan, he never failed to give shelter to the weary soldiers of the nation whenever they had approached him. Under his influence, our intellectuals as a whole have never lost touch with the national struggle.

This living link with the masses brought out the noblest instincts of Tagore's humanism. He did not merely applaud the men in battle from the grandstand. He came down into the arena and responded to the demands of the people magnificently. The renunciation of knighthood was a small thing for a great man, but it brought down upon him the wrath of Kipling's kin. The *Englishman* at the time wrote: "As if it mattered a brass farthing whether Sir Rabindranath Tagore who has pro-

bably never been heard of in the wilds of the Punjab, and who, as a writer is certainly not so popular as Colonel Frank Johnson, approved of the Government's policy or not! As if it mattered to the reputation, the honour and the security of British rule and justice whether the Bengalee poet remained a knight or a plain Babu!" But the plain Babu was not to be brow-beaten by Frank Johnson's fans. His ceaseless denunciation of imperialism continued, drawing him out, once again, of his seclusion to the public platform. Even in his old age he came out to lead the nation's protest against the brutalities of Hijli.

IV

TAGORE'S reactions during the last ten years were remarkable. These were the years of tremendous activity in the national movement. But these were also the years that saw the nervousness of our national leadership drifting helplessly to a retreat through inaction. In the outer world too, these were the years of the menacing rise of Fascism, of the growing conflict between progress and reaction. For the intellectuals the hour of choice came. Many followed the line of retreat, either openly as advocates of reaction or indirectly by returning to their old discarded shell of romantic escapism. The hard realities were too strong for their frail constitutions to bear. But the nobler minds did not cross the line, they remained with the people. Consciously or unconsciously, they felt that their place was with the people and that there was no going back. Tagore chose this path of progress. He was, perhaps, not conscious of it but it came out of his mighty humanism. The poet who, years ago, realised the futility of Ivory Tower once again remembered his own old prayer: *Ebar phirao moré*,—this time with even greater emphasis. He felt that in this decisive conflict he could not go to Innisfree with its 'nine bean rows' and 'hive for the honey-bee'. Even from his sick-bed he showed the daring and indignation of youth in his last public statement in reply to the Rathbone letter. Just when the class to which he belongs was following the line of retreat, the Poet chose to move forward with the people.

It is this which earns him the title of the People's Poet. Though born and bred in the best bourgeois tradition of Bengal, Tagore could move with the times, and the sign of the times indicated that in the alliance of the bourgeoisie

with the common people, the latter would be asserting more and more. Tagore as the finest cultural product of this alliance was its most worthy mouth-piece. To brand him as solely a poet in the service of the bourgeoisie would be unfair.

Equally would it be wrong to regard him as a declassed intellectual in the service of the people. Tagore had no clear conception of the class forces at work in society. The biggest thing that impressed him in the Soviet Union was not the Revolution, but the liquidation of illiteracy—a thing which was achieved under bourgeois conditions in the metropolitan countries. Even in his care for the peasantry, he started in the well-meaning individualist fashion with a patriarchal benevolence, believing sincerely that model villages like Sriniketan could eliminate poverty. His first reactions towards constructive national work was to spread education whether through the National Council or the Visva-Bharati, and here too he forgot that education itself is determined by surrounding social forces.

But these do not detract from his greatness. His progressivism lies in the fact that unlike many of his contemporaries, he was bold and candid enough to admit his disillusionment with the bourgeois standards of values. His last Birthday Message was a tragic confession of a class confronted with its own moral bankruptcy. He found out the futility of the philosophy of his class. True humanism, he realised, could come now only through a new philosophy, a new social order with new social values. He could only faintly discern its outline, but he welcomed it. Therein lies his greatness, a greatness that will get its true recognition, not to-day when the wide world is mourning him, but on the day when such a social order will be realised, when the common man will receive his rightful heritage. They will hail him as the poet of this age, whose rich legacy will be the starting-point of the richer culture of to-morrow.

TAGORE'S PORTRAITS

LONDON, Sep. 13.

In accordance with a suggestion made by Mr. Bernard Shaw, the Director of the National Portrait Gallery in London has agreed to hang portraits of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore painted by Sir William Rothenstein and Sir Maubhead Bone. Sir Kenneth Clark, Director of the National Gallery, made this move on behalf of the Tagore Society.—*Reuter*.

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TAGORE GENEALOGY

The Tagores belong to the *Sandilya Goira* and come of the *Rahri* clan of Bengal Brahmins, being Bandyopadhyaya. According to the 'Kulasastra', the Tagore family originally belonged to the *Kusari* line of Pithavoga. Bhattanarayan is the earliest *Kusari* known to us, but his son Dina Kusari may be regarded as the real founder of the *Kusari* line. Then came Jagannath Kusari, who was linked up with the *Pirali* family by his marriage with the daughter of Guri Sukadeva of Jessore, one of the original *Piralis*. After Jagannath came Purushottam, who may be regarded as the original head of the Tagore family. Sixth in descent from him came

PANCHANAN "THAKUR",

who left his original home in Jessore in 1690 and settled at Gobindapore, a village on the site of the present Fort William in Calcutta. The merchants of the locality used to call him "*Thakur Masai*" (Reverend Sir) from which he gradually came to be known as Panchanan "Thakur". This is said to be the origin of the surname of "Thakur", or Tagore in its anglicised form.

JAYARAM
(died 1756)

[Appointed *Amin* of the first Survey operations by the English in Calcutta in 1707, acquired considerable properties.]

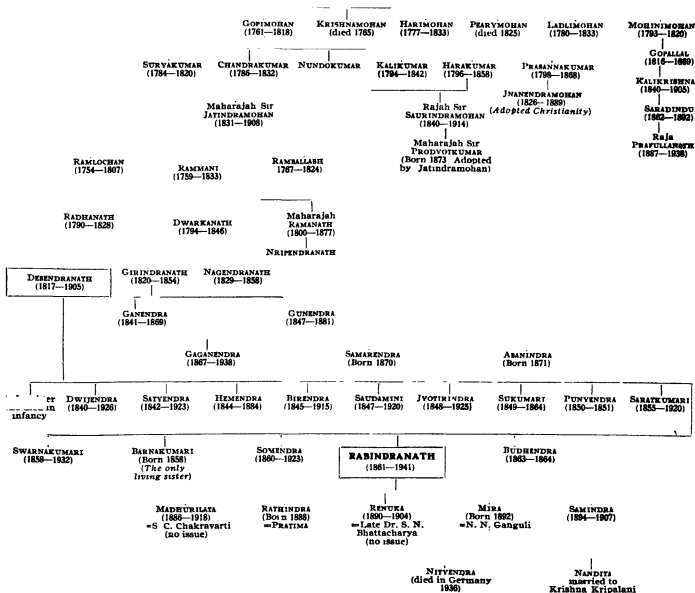
ANANDRAM
(died before 1756)

NILMANI
(died 1791)

DARPANARAIN
(1731—1793)

GOBINDARAM
(died 1777)

[After the battle of Plassey and the flow of wealth from Murshidabad to Calcutta Nilmani considerably added to his fortune and he purchased, in 1765, land at Pathuriaghatta, Calcutta and built a house thereon in which he lived with all his brothers till 1784, when he separated from them and settled with his sons at Jorasanko.]



Rabindranath's Nativity

[Compiled by SUŠIL KUMAR BANERJEE]

To numerous admirers of the Poet the reading of his Nativity (Janmakundali) will be a very interesting study as it will appear from the signs in the Zodiac (Rasi-chakra), where a wonderful and rare combination of planets and their positions indicate an extraordinary phenomenon in the life of the Jataka (the Born). This planetary combination and the places of the different stars in the Nativity foretell the Jataka's divine gifts, the moon (Chandra) at the first place (Lagna) at once indicating his most handsome features (Soumyamurti).

Rabindranath was born on the 7th of May, 1861, a little after 2-37 A.M., the Bengali date being the 25th day of Baisakh, 1268 B.S.

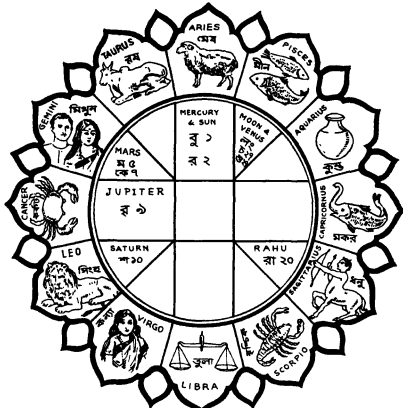
The day of birth was Monday, according to the Bengali reckoning, it being Krishna Trayodasi Tithi (thirteenth day of the dark moon) having Rebati Nakshatra, Min Rasi (Pisces) and Min Lagna, Bipra Varna and Devagana. Among the important planets we have both the Chandra (Moon) and Sukra (Venus) occupying the first place, the Lagna which is in the Min Rasi (Pisces), the Moon having 27 degrees and Venus 21 degrees respectively. Rabi (Sun) and Budha (Mercury) come next, occupying the second place having about 24 degrees in the ascendant (Tung) in the house of Mesha (Aries); this indicates that the Jataka is born in a noble and renowned family. Again, Budha-Aditya Yoga (combination of Sun and Mercury) having taken place, the Jataka's future will be marked by fame and riches. The most important feature in the Nativity is the high position of Brihaspati (Jupiter) which occupies the fifth place in Chandra Kshetra (the house of moon) where the Binimaya Yoga (a combination where there is a friendly exchange of planets) has taken place. A relation called Nava-Panchama Yoga (where the planet while occupying its own place also has the greatest influence on another place; here Brihaspati occupies its own place and influences the first place where there are both Sukra and Chandra) has also been established, to which also Sukra (Venus) is added, the most happy result being the birth of a poet. Also, Sukra, though occupying the first place, is the Tritiyapati (lord of the third house), and its being in conjunction with Chandra indicates the Jataka's sea-voyage and world-wide travel. Rahu also spreads its rays in the fifth house, indicating the Jataka's power in the domain of poetry other than his own native tongue.

Rabindranath's departure from this mortal world was signalled in the Nativity when both the planets of Mangal (Mars)

রবীন্দ্রনাথের জন্ম-কুণ্ডলী

শকাব্দ ১৭৮৩/০৫/২৫/৩০

সন ১২৬৮/২৫শে বৈশাখ—জন্মসময়—সোমবার। রাত্রি ২।৩৭ গতে ৥



Sambat Era 1783. Christian Era 1861 A.D.—7th May—Tuesday. Bengali Era 1268 B.S. Time of birth 2-37 A.M.

Positions of the Planets

| | | | |
|-----------------|----------|----------------------|---------|
| Sun (Rabi) ... | 0/24/39 | Jupiter (Brihaspati) | 3/26/16 |
| Moon (Chandra) | 11/20/44 | Saturn (Sani) | 4/11/5 |
| Mercury (Budha) | 0/8/6 | Rahu | 8/25/10 |
| Venus (Sukra) | 0/23/21 | Ketu | 2/25/10 |
| Mars (Mangal) | 2/10/25 | Dasam | 8/3/24 |
| (Lagna) | 11/1/13 | | |

Krishna Trayodasi Tithi—Rebati Nakshatra—Min Rasi (Pisces) and Min Lagna.

and Sani (Saturn) became lords of the 12th and 2nd house (Dwadaspati) and (Dwitiyapati). This indicates shortening of the span of life of the Jataka, which would be caused by some ulceration in the body when Rahu would also spread cruel rays on Brihaspati (Jupiter) and Mangal (Mars) and influence them. The influence of Mars over the Lagnapati Brihaspati (Jupiter) indicates surgical operation and ultimate death of the Jataka. The Nativity also points out the death of the Jataka in the same place where he was born; Lagnapati Brihaspati is seen at the Charasthan (1st place),

which indicates the death of the Jataka at a distance place, but Saturn (Sani), who is the Arch Destroyer, being in the 2nd place (Sthira Rasi), makes a combination with Brihaspati, which causes the Jataka to come from a different place to meet the fatality. Thus the great end Tirobbhab (passing away) was marked on Thursday, the 22nd Shrabhan 1348 B.S. (7th August, 1941), which was also a very auspicious day—the close of the Hindu festival of Sre Sree Sri-Krishna, which was inaugurated by the Gandharvas, the night being Shrabhan-Purnima (full moon).

Rabindranath Tagore

A Chronicle of Eighty Years

1861—1941



From a bronze
bust by an Italian
sculptor at the
Royal Asiatic
Society, Calcutta.

This Chronicle compiled and
annotated for *The Tagore
Birthday Special Supplement*
to THE CALCUTTA MUNICIPAL
GAZETTE has since been
revised, enlarged and brought
up to date. New illustrations
have also been added.

—THE EDITOR

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

THE HOUSE
WHERE
HE WAS BORN

6 Dwarkanath Tagore Lane, Calcutta, known as the Jorasanko House is a great rambling mansion in the heart of Calcutta's teeming life. Only a portion of the house is seen here.



1861--1866

FIRST 5 YEARS

BORN in Calcutta, at 6, Dwarkanath Nath Tagore Lane, named after his grandfather, the "Prince" Dwarkanath * on Tuesday,



THE POET'S GRANDFATHER
Dwarkanath Tagore

* A friend and disciple of the great Hindu reformer and founder of the Brahmo Samaj, Rammohun Roy, the Poet's grandfather, Dwarkanath Tagore (1794-1846) contributed more largely than any of his contemporaries to the wonderful social progress which marked the history of Bengal during the first half of the nineteenth century, a man of whom *The Times* commented, on his death, observed that "his name would be proudly associated with all the noble institutions flourishing in Calcutta."

He was the first Indian to enter into mercantile business in Calcutta on the European model and when in 1834 he established in partnership with Mr W Carr and Mr W Phipps, the firm of Carr Tagore & Co, the Governor General of the day Lord William Bentinck, considered the event of sufficient importance to make it the subject of a congratulatory letter to the author of the enterprise. He also founded the Union Bank.

Reorganiser of the Hindu College, founder of the Medical College, both of which he endowed with munificent gifts, Dwarkanath took a leading part in the establishment of the Landholders' Society now known as the British Indian Association. Rammohun found in the friend of his a zealous and powerful co-adjutor in his

efforts for the abolition of the cruel rite of *Suttee*. In the agitation which ultimately led to the establishment of regular steamer communication between India and England, Dwarkanath took a prominent share. Against the Press Act of 1824 he fought at considerable cost to himself, and when Lord Metcalfe liberated the Indian Press from its shackles in 1835 at a public dinner at the Town Hall to commemorate the event, his health was tested as one whose name was inseparably connected with the cause whose triumph was being celebrated. He also took a prominent part in connection with the agitation against what was known as the "Black Act".

Dwarkanath first visited Europe in 1841. A public meeting was held at the Town Hall on the eve of his departure presided over by the Sheriff at which a complimentary address was presented to him on behalf of the Indian and European citizens of Calcutta. In London the Court of Directors of the East India Company entertained him at a public dinner and presented him with a gold medal in recognition of his services to his country. He was received by Queen Victoria with whom he lunched at Buckingham

May 7, 1861, between 2-30 and 5 A.M. (corresponding to Monday, the 25th *Baisakh*, Bengali Era, 1268 and Saka Era, 1783), fourteenth issue (ninth son) of the "Maharshi" Debendra Nath Tagore and Sarada Devi (1824-1875).

banquet at the Guild Hall where the Lord of the Palace attended the Lord Mayor's annual banquet at the Guildhall when the Lord Mayor proposed his health in a special toast, he was admitted as a Burgess and a Guild Brother of the city of Edinburgh and received in Paris by King Louis Philippe by the King and Queen of Belgium in Brussels and by the Pope in Rome. On his return to India, in 1842, he refused to perform the expiatory ceremony—*prayaschitta*. He died in London in 1846 on a second visit to England when he took with him, at his own expense, four students of the Medical College for higher studies in medicine. His funeral at Kensal Green was attended by the Royalty and the nobility in England.

His unbounded charity and his lavish hospitality earned for him the title of "Prince." No man after Rammohun did more than Dwarkanath to promote the welfare and advancement of his countrymen. He had thoroughly imbued the spirit of modern progress, and he spared neither his endless energy nor his princely wealth to promote the cause he had at heart.

His admiring disciples and followers gave the title of *Maharshi* or the 'great saint' to the Poet's father Debendranath Tagore (1817-1905) and his countrymen loved to call him so such. As a boy he studied at Rammohun Roy's school and later at the Hindu College. As the eldest son of Dwarkanath Tagore he had unbounded wealth at his disposal but early in life he lost all interest in worldly pursuits. A stray leaf of the *Ishopanishad* asking men to seek God and not covet wealth had set his mind thinking and he left his father's firm of Carr Tagore

A CHRONICLE OF EIGHTY YEARS



THE POET'S FATHER

Maharshi Debendranath

THE POET'S MOTHER

Sarada Devi

Debendra Nath purchases in 1853, about 20 *bighas* of land at Bolpur, the present site of Santiniketan and Visva-Bharati.

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parts is strictly
reserved*

1867—1876

AGE 6—15

& Co., where he had been placed, to study religion and philosophy. The world lost its attractions for him and God became his only comfort.

In 1839, he founded the *Tattvabodhini Sabha*, or the Society for the Knowledge of Truth and started its journal, the *Tattva Bodhini Patrika*. He made it the medium for instructing his countrymen in the tenets of the Hindu theism of the *Upanishads* as well as philosophical and antiquarian knowledge. In its days it worked a great revolution in the advanced thought of Bengal.

The *Brahmo Samaj*, which had been founded by Rammohun Roy in 1828, had languished after his death in England in 1833. Debendranath formally joined it in 1842 and in 1843, he introduced the "Brahmic Covenant", an instrument of catholic principles as applied to Hindu theism. In 1845, he sent four young Brahmins to Benares to study the four *Vedas*. After two years they returned to Calcutta when, after much discussion, the *Brahmo Samaj*, under Debendranath's lead, decided that neither the *Vedas* nor the *Upanishads* were to be accepted as infallible. This departure from orthodoxy marked a turning point in the history of the *Brahmo Samaj*. In 1850, Debendranath published his well-known treatise, *Brahmo Dharma* in which he collected and presented the highest Hindu teachings on the unity of God and his worship without image.

In the meanwhile, Debendranath had lost his father and calamity befell the family in the failure of the Union Bank and other commercial undertakings started by Dwarkanath. Against the advice of his friends and relations Debendranath took on his own shoulders debts running into more than a crore of rupees which he could have legally

repudiated as not being personal. The consequence was that he had to part with much valuable property including the famous Belgatchia Villa (where Dwarkanath used to entertain Lord Auckland and his sisters and the elite of the Calcutta society) as well as the splendid equipages, plate and enormous jewellery left by his father, and to live for years with strict economy. Such a sacrifice, unparalleled in the annals of Calcutta society, at once raised Debendranath's reputation for honesty and upright conduct and marked him out as a man who practised as he preached.

Beyond acting for a time as Honorary Secretary to the British Indian Association, in which capacity he addressed, in 1851, a remarkable letter to the prominent men in Madras on the need of an all-India organisation, he took little part in secular affairs, and, at one time, retired for some years to the Himalayas for contemplation and meditation.

As the teacher and "Spiritual father" of Keshab Chandra Sen, the third great leader of the *Brahmo Samaj*, Debendranath's influence had had enduring results. His stirring sermons in Bengali delivered from the pulpit of the *Brahmo Samaj* served to reclaim many a wanderer from the path of religion and morality. His impassioned eloquence no less than his saintly life contributed greatly to the success of his high mission as a reviver of religion. He was a voluminous writer on religious subjects and was the author of a large number of treatises and tracts dealing with the tenets of Brahmoism. His *Atmajibani* (autobiography) is a noble and permanent asset of Bengali literature.

Debendranath died in Calcutta in 1905 at the glorious old age of 87.

ADMITTED to Oriental Seminary; leaves it after a short while to join Normal School; is later placed, along with his elder brother Somendranath and nephew Satya Prasad Ganguly, under private tutors,—the subjects taught including rudiments of physics, elementary geometry, arithmetic, history and geography, physiology and anatomy besides Sanskrit grammar, Bengali and English; also drawing and music; practises wrestling and gymnastics; makes first attempts at versification in 1868; joins Bengal Academy but plays truant shortly after*; visits, for the first time, Santiniketan with his father, coming back for his *Upanayan* (Brahminical initiation into *Gayatri* prayers) in Calcutta on 6th February, 1873 (25th Magh, 1279 B.E., age: 11 yrs. 10 mths.); composes a

* The Poet writes in "My Boyhood Days":—

"From morning till night the mills of learning went on grinding. To wind up this creaking machinery was the work of *Shejdada* (third eldest brother)—Hemendranath. He was a stern taskmaster.... Studies of all kinds were heaped upon me.... The clock strikes ten.... the old horse draws me in the rickety carriage to my Andamans, in which from ten to four I am doomed to exile. At half past four I return from school. The gymnastic master has come, and for

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

drama *Prithviraj Rajaya* ('The Defeat of Prithviraj'), the manuscript of which is lost; accompanies his father—after a short stay at Santiniketan—on an extensive tour through northern India, staying at Amritsar for a month and four months in the Himalayas (Dalhousie); receives from his father regular lessons in Sanskrit grammar, English and rudiments of Astronomy; returns to Calcutta and is admitted to St Xavier's School (1874), one of his earliest poems under the title *Abhilas* ('Desire') published anonymously in the *Tatvabodhini Patrika* (Nov.-Dec., 1874), it being only mentioned that it is composed by a 12-year-old boy, death occurs of his mother (March 8, 1875: Poet's age: 13 yrs. 10 mths.).

Early Days and Early Poems

THE first poem published over his name appears in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (then an Anglo-Bengali weekly) of February 25, 1875, written for and recited (on February 11, 1875) at the 'Hindu Mela', a patriotic gathering held annually in Calcutta (sponsored in 1867 by Rajnarain Rose and organized by Nabagopal Mitra and the Poet's cousin, Ganendranath Tagore).^{*} study under tutors continued at home in Sanskrit poetry and drama (*Kumarsambhavam* and *Sakuntala*) and in English literature (mainly Shakespeare); translates *Macbeth* into Bengali verse (a portion of it was later published in the Bengali magazine, *Bharati* of 1880-81), composes a song for a patriotic play, *Sarojini*, written by his fifth brother Jyotirindranath Tagore (1848-1925); writes at about this time *Bana Phul* ('The Wild Flower'), a long poem running into eight cantos and fully published in 1876 in *Jnanankur* (a Bengali monthly edited by Sri Krishna Das), also composes some lyrics in the style of Vaishnava *padabali* (lyrics) under the pseudonym of "Bhanu-sinha Thakur"; goes with his father on a second sojourn to the Himalayan regions.

about an hour I exercise my body on the parallel bars. He is no sooner gone than the drawing-master arrives. In this way the days passed monotonously on. My spirit shrank and faded among those drab-coloured days."

*An interesting report of this—the first public appearance of the Poet has been unearthed by Brajendra Nath Banerjee from the *Indian Daily News* of Calcutta, dated the 15th February, 1875. It runs as follows:

"The Hindu Mela" The Ninth Anniversary of the Hindoo mela was opened at 4 PM on Thursday, the 11th instant, at the well-known Parscebagan on the Circular Road, by Rajah Komol Krishna Bahadur, the President of the National Society.

Baloo Rohindra Nath Tagore, the youngest son of Baloo Debedro Nath Tagore, a handsome lad of some 15, had composed a Bengali poem on Bharat (India) which he delivered from memory, the suavity of his tone much pleased his audience."

It only remains to be added that the Poet then aged 13 years and 9 months and not 15 years as stated—Ed

1877-1884

AGE 16-23

RETURNING to Calcutta, appears in the role of 'Alik Babu', a character in a play written by Jyotirindranath, privately staged at the Jorasanko House,^{*} contributes



THE FIRST PHOTOGRAPH
1873-74

poems (including the 'Bhanu-sinha' series), essays, literary criticisms (notably one on Michael Madhusudan Dutt's *Meghanadbadha Kavya*)—all to the new Bengali monthly magazine, *Bharati*, started in 1877 and edited by his eldest brother Dwijendranath Tagore (1840-1926); other contributions include *Bhikharini* (a long story), *Karna* (a novel, unfinished), *Kabi Kahini* (a long poem) and articles on such varied topics as 'English Manners', 'The Anglo-Saxons and Anglo-Saxon Literature', 'Beatrice and Dante' and a review of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's poems (*Kabita-Pustak*); composes and

*This, however, appears to be not his first appearance on the stage. Before this he had appeared, with his brother Jyotirindranath, in the performance of a musical play written by the latter, to which Rabindranath had contributed a few songs. This play was published under the title *Manamayi* in 1880—Ed



BRAJA BABU

Brajnath De under whom Tagore studied privately at home: 1870-75

reads at the Hindu Mela, a poem on Lord Lytton's Delhi Durbur (1877), immediately following the great Indian Famine—an impassioned indictment of the cringing tribute paid by the Princes and peoples of India to "the golden chain" imposed on India by England;^{*} is sent to stay and study English literature with his second brother Satyendranath Tagore (1842-1923), the first Indian member of the Indian Civil Service, then District Judge, Ahmedabad

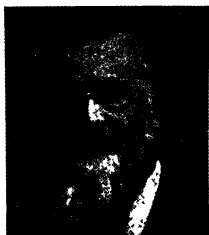
In England

SAILS with Satyendranath for England by s.s. *Poona*, on September 20, 1878; his first book of poems, *Kabi-Kahini* is published on November 5, 1878; arrives in London and goes to school at Brighton staying with Mrs. Satyendranath Tagore and her children—Surendranath and Indira (later Mrs. Pramatha Chaudhuri): shortly after brought to London by Taraknath Palit (later Sir T. Palit) and admitted to the University College; studies English literature under Prof. Henry Morley (brother of Lord Morley),†—staying at first with his Latin tutor (opposite Regent's Park) and then with Prof. Barker and Dr. Scott; also studies European Music and is a frequent visitor to the British Museum; attends a session of the House of Commons to hear Gladstone and Bright; contributes (from London) poems (not-

*This patriotic poem later found place in his brother Jyotirindranath's drama *Swapnamayee* published in 1883.—Ed.

†Shakespeare's "Coriolanus" and Sir Thomas Browne's "Urn Burial" were two of the books he read with Henry Morley. Of Henry Morley's teaching, Tagore writes: "Literature came to life in his mind and in the sound of his voice, it reached to our inner beings.... With his guidance, I found the study of the Clarendon Press books at home to be an easy matter, and I took upon myself to be my own teacher."

An interesting story is told about Henry Morley setting an essay to his class in which Tagore expressed himself strongly on the 'British rule in India. Morley praised the essay to his pupils, some of whom, including a few Indians, had helped fulsome praise on Englishmen in India.—Ed



HENRY MORLEY

Under whom Tagore studied English Literature at the University College, London 1879-80

ably *Bhagna-lata* 'The Wrecked Boat', a verse-ballad written at Torquay) and a series of letters (*Europe-Prabasi Patra*) recording his impressions of England and the English people—published in *Bhadrati* with critical footnotes by the editor (Dwijendranath), also a number of poems and essays on a variety of topics—begins in England the verse-drama *Bhagna Hridaya* ('Broken Heart') published later in book form (1881)

First Public Speech

RETURNS to India (1880) writes two musical plays *Valmiki Pratna* ('The Genius of Valmiki') and *Kal-Mitragata* ('The Fatal Hunt') appears in the role of Valmiki in the former and the Blind Hermit in the latter in the performances of the two plays (the first in February, 1881* and the second on the 23rd December, 1882) staged at the Jorasanko house before a distinguished gathering including Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-1894), Gura-

das Banerjee (1844-1918) and others, condemns in a scathing article in the *Bhadrati* the opium trade carried on by England in China under the title of *Chine Maraner Byabasa* ('The Traffic of Death in China'), discourse on "Music and Feeling" (with vocal demonstrations) at the Lecture Theatre of the Calcutta Medical College (his first appearance as a public speaker) at a meeting held (May, 1881) under the auspices of the Bethune Society (founded 1851) with the Reverend Krishna Mohan Banerjee (1813-1885) in the chair

Bankim's Blessings

LEAVES for England in May, 1881 with Satya Prasad Ganguly (his nephew) and his friend Anantosh Chaudhuri (later a Judge of the Calcutta High Court) to study law, changes his mind and returns from Madras and proceeds to Mussoree to meet his father begins in the *Bhadrati* his first extant novel *Banthalakuram Hat* ('The Young Queen's Market'), publishes *Rudrachand* (a historical drama in blank verse) publishes *Sandhya-Sangeet* ('Evening Songs') in 1882, which so impresses Bankim Chandra Chatterjee that at a social function at the house of the late Mr Romesh C. Dutt (1848-1909) he takes off the garland of greeting from his neck and places it round that of Rabindranath, stays with Jyotirindranath at Chander-nagore composing poems and setting some to music, returns to Calcutta and stays at 10, Sudder Street (off Chowringhee near the Indian Museum), here comes the "Great Illumination" and is written the exquisite poem, *Nirharer Saapna-bhanga* ('The Mountain Awakened from its Dream'), which is the key-poem of *Pratna Sangeet* ('Morning Songs') 1883*, takes a leading part in attempts (which proved unsuccessful) to establish an Academy of Bengali Literature with the assistance of Rajendra Lala Mitra (1821-1893), reads

a paper (March 23, 1883) entitled *Kal-kushmanda* ('Good for Nothing') at the fifth anniversary of the Sabitri Library, deploring the futile social, political and literary efforts of those days, visits Katwar on the sea (Bombay) with Satyendranath returns to Calcutta, marries Mrinalini Devi, daughter of Beni Rai Choudhuri of Jessore, on December 9 1883 (Poet's age 22); writes the verse-drama *Pratna Sangeet* (long trans.—'Sannivasi'), the poems of *Chhabito-Gan* ('Sketches and Songs') in the *Bhadrati*, his first great sorrow in life comes in the death of his sister-in-law, Jyotirindranath's wife (May 20, 1884) to whom he was deeply attached (see "My Boyhood Days"); composes the poems of *Kadi-o-Kamal*



AS A STUDENT IN LONDON 1879-80

* The play and the performance so impressed the great novelist that in reviewing *Hari Prasad Sastri's* well-known *Valmiki Jyoti* ('The Victory of Valmiki'), he wrote in his "Bangadarsan" —

"বাহার্য বাবু বঙ্গব্রাহ্মণ ঠাকুরের 'বাল্মীকি-প্রতিভা' পড়িয়াছেন, বা তাহার অভিনয় দেখিয়াছেন, তাহার্য কবিতার ক্ষমতাসম্পন্ন কথন ভুলিতে পারিবেন না। স্বরপ্রসার শাস্ত্র...বঙ্গব্রাহ্মণের অনুশ্রবণ করিয়াছেন।"

† Of *Sandhya Sangeet* and *Pratna Sangeet* Dr Brajendra Nath Seal wrote in his famous "New Essays in Criticism" —

"Along with the waning and waning light, the rising and setting sun comes floating to the poet's soul aerial phantasms and drowsy enchantments, memories of days of fancy and fire, ghostly visitations and flashes of Maenad-like inspiration, which the poet seizes in many a page of delicate silver-lined intonations of or imaginative verse. In these songs Bengali poetry rises to the height of neo-romanticism"

('Shrubs and Plants') with translations from Shelley, Mrs Browning, Ernest Myers, Aubrey de Vere, Victor Hugo and other European poets, reads another paper at the Sabitri Library (August 26, 1884) entitled *Hale-Kalame* ('Theory and Practice') in which he strongly criticises the futile method and humiliating character of the political agitation of the time,* is appointed

* The Poet wrote —

স্বপ্নে agitate করিতে বাইব কি ইরাকের কাছে। আমরা পশে নব্বোকে ইরাককে গণ হাড়িরা বিই, আকিসে ইরাক



THE SECOND PHOTOGRAPH 1875-76

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

ed Secretary of the Adi Brahma Samaj (October, 1884), enters into a controversy (writing in *Bharati*) with Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (writing in *Nabajuban* and *Prachar*) on the ideals of Hinduism, which ends in the great novelist's writing a most generous letter of appreciation to the young poet and polemic

1885-1889

AGE 24-28

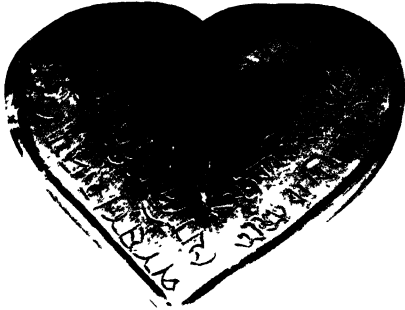
IS placed (April, 1885) in charge of *Balak*, a new Bengali monthly magazine for the young edited by Mrs. Satyendranath Tagore, later incorporated with *Bharati* writes for *Balak* a

প্রভু পালাপালি সন্ম করি, ইংরাজের গৃহে
সিঁড়ি ঘোড়হেতে তাহাকে মা বাপ বলিয়া তাঁহার
নিকটে উষ্মলারি করি, ও তাহার ধানসোয়া
বস্ত্র বস্ত্রকে সেলাম করি। ঐ সাধেব বলিয়া
চাচা বলিয়া কুণী করি, ইংরাজ আমাদিগকে
সরকারী বাগানের বৈকিতে বসিতে দেখিলে
ঘাড় খরিয়া উঠাইয়া দিত চায়, ইংরাজ
তাহাদের ক্রমে আমাদিগকে প্রবেশ করিতে
দিত চায় না, ইংরাজ রেল গাড়িতে তাহাদের
বসিবার আসন স্বতন্ত্র করিয়া লইত চায়,
gentlemen শব্দে ইংরাজ ইংরাজকে বোলে ও
বাবু আরে মসীজীবি ভীলসাদকে বোলে, ইংরাজ
আমাদের প্রাণ তাঁহাদের আরাধা পশ্চর প্রাণ
অপেক্ষা শ্রেষ্ঠ বিবেচনা করে না, ইংরাজ
আমাদের গৃহে আসিয়া আমাদের অপমান
করিয়া যায় আমবা তাঁহার প্রশিবিধান কবিত্তে
পাখি উঠে। সেই ইংরাজের কাছে আমবা agitate
করিতে যাউব যে, তোমরা আমাদিগকে
তোমাদের সমকক্ষ আন দাও।

আর ইংরাজের সমকক্ষ হইবার জন্য
ইংরাজের কাছে হাত ঘোড় কবিত্তে যাওয়া এই
বা কেমনতর তাহালা। সমকক্ষ আমরা নিজের
প্রভাবে হইব না? আমবা নিজের জাতির
গৌরব নিয়ে বাড়াইব না? নিজের জাতির
শিখা বিস্তার করিব না? নিজের জাতির
অপমানের প্রতিবিধান করিব না, অপমান দূর
করিব না? ...

ভিক্টোরিয়ান সম্মানের তাজ না হয় মাথা
পরিলাম, কিন্তু কোপীনা ত দুটিন না। এইকল
বেশ দেখিয়া কি প্রভুবা হায়ে না।

নিজের সম্মান যে নিয়ে যাবে না, পবের
এমনিই কি মাথাবাগা তাহাকে সম্মানিত কবিত্তে
আমিবে? আমবা ই বা কেন স্বজাতিকে কৃণা
কবি, স্বজাতিয় কৃণা কই না, স্বপ্নর পথিতে চাই
না, ইংরাজের কল্যাণী কড়াইয়া দিতে পারিলে
গোলাক-প্রাপ্তিস্থর অস্ত্রের কবিত্তে থাকি।
আমবা আমাদের ভাষা, আমাদের সাহিত্যের
এমন উন্নতি কবিত্তে চেষ্টা না কবি কেন, বাহাতে
আমাদের ভাষা আমাদের সাহিত্য পবের প্রজ্জ্বল
হইয়া উঠে। যে দেশদীপের আমাদের জাতিকে,
আমাদের বাহ্যরকে, আমাদের ভাষাকে,
আমাদের সাহিত্যকে নিতান্ত হেয় জ্ঞান করিয়া



The above is an enlarged reproduction of a piece of quartzite stone cut in the form of a heart by the Poet's own hand and the verse composed and engraved by him when he was staying at Kasur on the sea (Bombay) with his brother Saltyendranath in 1883. It was presented to his friend the poet W. Shyochandra Chaudhury. The verse runs thus:

পাথর হৃদয় কেটে
বোরিসু মিলের হাতে
আর কি মুহুরে লেখা
অক্লবাবিধা পাতে?

Having cut my heart of stone,
I have engraved (the words) with
my own hand. Will it (the en-
graving) be ever effaced by the flow of
tears?"

THE HEART STONE
Exact SizeEngraved by Mrs. J. N. Bose
Reproduction strictly
forbidden by the owner

novel, *Rajarshi*, (published 1887),
the story *Mukul* (published 1908),
numerous essays and articles, letters
and humorous sketches, a brochure on
Rim Mohun Roy (1885) undertakes
editing of an anthology of Vashnava

Padmali (lyrics) jointly with his
friend, Sush Chandra Majumdar,
Rabi Chhaya the first collection of his

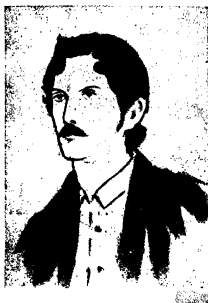
নিজের উন্নতি-পথে ক্ষীত হইয়া উঠেন, তাহাখাই
হৃদয় সজা করিয়া জাতীয় সম্মানের জন্য
ইংরাজের কাছে নাম-সহি-করা দরখাস্ত পাঠাই-
তেছেন নিজ ইহাদিগকে সম্মান কবিত্তে
পারেন না, প্রত্যাশা কবিত্তে থাকেন ইংরাজের
তাঁহাদিগকে সম্মান কবিত্তে।

আমাদের গলাব শৃঙ্খলা গ্রহিয়া ইংরাজ
যদি আমাদিগকে তাঁহাদের কাঁদিকাকটে অস্ত্র
উঠু ভাষার লটকাইবা দেয় তাহা হইলেই কি
আমাদের চরম উন্নতি কি আমাদের পবর
সম্মান হইল। যথার্থ স্বাধী ও বাপক উন্নতি
কি আমাদের নিজের ভাষা নিজের সাহিত্য
নিজের গৃহের মধ্য হইতে হইবে না। নহিলে
পেটের মধ্যে কৃণা লইয়া হাওয়া খাইয়া বেড়াইলে
কিন্তু পাতা বলা হইবে। জনহের মধ্যে
আজ্ঞাবমান বহন করিয়া অমুগ্রহেলক বাহিরের
সম্মান দুটিন দুটিনা মূবপুঙ্খ-বিশ্বাস কবিলে
মহর কি। যে অবমানিত, তাহাকে আরও
অবমানিত কবিত্তে লোকে দৃষ্টিত হয় না।
আমরা খার অবমানিত, সেই সন্তাই আমাদিগকে
পবে অপমান করে। সেইজন্যই বলিতেছি,
আইস আমবা ঘবর সম্মান বলা কবিত্তে প্রজ্জ্বল
হই, স্বহস্তে আমাদের উৎকর্ষ সাধন করি, ..
পবের কাছে সামান্ত সম্মানইহু না পাইলে যিন
যদি বুৎ বুৎ করিয়া মারা পড়িব না। ...



—In the role of Valmiki in the per-
formance of his play 'Valmiki-Pratna'
staged at the Jorasanko House in 1881.

songs published by a friend (1885); publishes *Alochana*, discourses on various topics, and the poems of *Satsab Sangeet* ('Songs of Childhood')—a group of about sixteen poems of his early years (13 to 16), dedicated



The Poet's brother Jyotirindranath, the guide, philosopher and friend of his early youth

to his deceased sister-in-law Mrs. Jyotirindranath Tagore; attends on his sick father at Bandra (Bombay); goes to stay in Sholapur with Satyendranath; his first child (daughter, Madhurilata, or Bela) born on February 22, 1886; is engaged in several controversies on social and socio-religious subjects in the pages of *Sanjivance* (a Bengali weekly founded by Dwarka Nath Ganguly, Heramba Chandra Maitra, Kali Sankar Sukul, Paresu Nath Sen, Krishna Kumar Mitra—Editor, Gagan Chandra Home—Asst. Editor) against writings appearing in the *Bangabasee* (another Bengali weekly edited by Jogendra Chandra Bose) attacking the ideas and ideals of Brahmo Samaj; composes and sings the opening song (*Amra Milechhi a Mayer dake*: 'Assembled are we to-day at the call of the Mother') at the second session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta, in December, 1886; publishes some letters on social questions, in *Chitthi Patra* (1887); Asutosh Chaudhuri publishes *Kadi-o-Kamal* ('Sharps and Flats') 1886; the first collection of critical essays on various subjects, *Samalochana* appears in 1888; visits Satyendranath, then posted at Nasik; spends some time at Ghazipur, where he writes most of the *Manasi* group of poems; returns to Calcutta and stays with his father at Park Street; reads, at the instance of Bipin Chandra Pal (1858-1933), a paper on the ideals of Hindu marriage in the hall of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science with the late Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar (1833-1904) in the



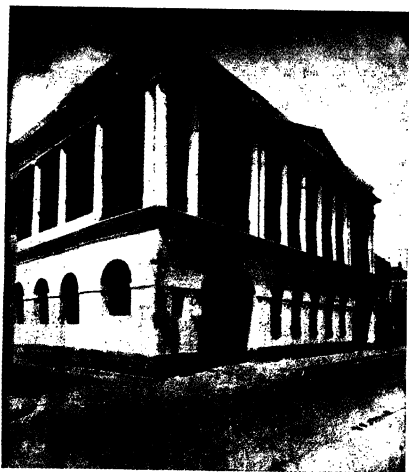
A pencil-sketch of the Poet drawn by Jyotirindranath in 1877

chair; a bitter and prolonged controversy follows, in which the Poet receives the support of M.-M. Mahesh Ch. Nayaratna (1836-1906), the then

Principal of Sanskrit College; first visit to Darjeeling (1887); goes to stay in Shelidah, the headquarters of his ancestral estates, with his wife and



About the time when his "Praval-Sangeet" was published: 1883-1884



WHERE THE "GREAT AWAKENING" CAME

—The House at 10, Sudder Street, Calcutta, where Rabindranath wrote his 'Nirharer Swapna-bhaiga' (The Fountain Awakened from its Dream) the key-poem to "Praval-Sangeet", from which he dates his real birth as a poet. Writes he in his REMINISCENCES:—"Where the Sudder Street ends, trees in the garden of Free School Street are visible. One morning I was standing in the verandah, looking at them. The sun was slowly rising above the screen of their leaves; and as I was watching it, suddenly, in a moment, a veil seemed to be lifted from the eyes. I found the world wrapt in an inexpressible glory with its waves of joy and beauty bursting and breaking on all sides. A veil was suddenly withdrawn and everything became luminous. The whole scene was one perfect music—one marvellous rhythm. That very day the poem known as 'The Fountain Awakened from its Dream' flowed on like a fountain itself. . . . There was nothing and no one whom I did not love at that moment. . . . I seemed to witness, in the wholeness of my vision, the movements of the body of all humanity, and to feel the beat of the music and the rhythm of a mystic dance".

RABINDRANATH TAGORE



—With his newly-wedded wife: 1883-84



—With their first-born: 1886

Courtesy: Mrs. J. N. Bose
reproduction strictly forbidden by the owner.

daughter and his nephew Balendranath Tagore (1871-1899); goes again to Ghazipore, incessantly writing poems and composing songs; writes, at the request of Mrs. P. K. Ray, *Mayar Khela*, a musical play, for performance by the members of the

Sakhi Samiti (a ladies' club, started by the Poet's elder sister Swarnakumari Devi); his eldest son, Rathindranath born on the 27th November, 1888; appears in the role of 'King Vikrama' in a private performance of his *Raja-o-Rani* ('King and Queen'),

dedicated to his eldest brother, Dwijendranath, and published in 1889; leaves for Shahajadpur to write another play, the well-known *Visarjan* ('Sacrifice'), dedicated to his nephew, Surendranath Tagore, and published in 1890.



—With his eldest daughter: 1887

After a drawing by an English artist.



—With his eldest daughter and son: 1889-90



1886

From a Photo taken
in Cassutta



1890

From a Photo of
in London

I CHRONICLE OF EIGHTY YEARS



11 Sheldah 1890

1890-1899

AGE 29-38

SITTING at Santiniketan composes his magnificent poem on *Megha Duta* (inspired by Kalidasa's famous theme, 'The Cloud-Messenger'), his second daughter Renuka born 31st January, 1890, sails for England (Aug 22, 1890) with his friend Loken Palit (son of Sir J Palit) and his second brother Satyendranath Tagore arrives in London via Italy and France and returns to India, landing in Bombay, 4th November, 1890 after a sojourn of about ten weeks abroad is now called upon to shoulder responsible work in connection with the management of the Tagore estates, makes Sheldah his headquarters and constantly tours by houseboat to different parts of the *zemindari*—Patisar Sheldah, Kusthia, Pabna, Kumarkhali and Cuttack (Balua)—and introduces a remarkably efficient system of administration, which receives appreciative notice in Government publications attends the sixth session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta (Dec. 1890) under the presidency of Pherozshah Mehta, when he sings the *Bande Mataram* on the opening day, acts as Secretary to a committee of prominent Calcutta citizens for a public entertainment to the Congress President in the Town Hall

Sheldah and "Sadhana"

JOINS his nephew Sudhindra with Tagore, in bringing out a new Bengali monthly magazine *Sadhana* turning out poems, short stories, essays, reviews, political and even scientific articles and topical notes himself filling more than half the new periodical every month also commences his famous *Europe Jatra Diary* ('Diary of a Traveller to Europe') collaborates with Krishna Kamal Bhattacharya (1840-1932) in starting the Bengali weekly *Hilabadi* contributes to it a number of short

stories (notably, 'Post Master'), takes part in the ceremonial festivities of the 7th Pans (1298 B E) in connection with the consecration of the prayer hall at Santiniketan his youngest daughter Mira born 12th January, 1892, writes his verse-drama *Chitrangada* dedicating it to his nephew Abanindranath Tagore, who illustrates it (1892)

TOURS frequently in North Bengal looking after the affairs of the estate establishes intimate contact with the life of the people around him,—the patient, submissive, family-loving, Bengali roots—goes to Cuttack (Orissa)

12 A letter written about this time about his

I feel a great tenderness for these peasant folk our saviours but helpless, unfortunate children of Providence, who must have I feel brought to their very doors when they are undone When the rains of Mother Earth dry up they

THE ILLUSTRATIONS

In laying out the pictures illustrating this Chronicle it has not been found in some cases possible to place these alongside or near the events or occurrences recorded The sequence of time has however, been maintained, as far as possible in arranging the pictures

THE EDITOR



—Singing to the accompaniment of a *esraj* played by his nephew Abanindranath the artist

1888-89



RABINDRANATH TAGORE



Instructing Abanindranath to draw the illustration of
"Chitrangada" 1892



Setting his songs to tune with his brother Abanindranath at the organ 1892-93

by steamer from Calcutta to inspect the zemindars there engages in the pages of *Sadhana* in a sharp controversy with Chandra Nath Bose (1843-1909) over the latter's essay (published in *Sahitya*, another Bengali monthly edited by the late Suresh Chandra Samajpati) on the metaphysics of dietetics; also writes two remarkable articles *Shri Majoor* ('The Temple Labourer') and *Karmee Umedar* ('The Job hunter') showing the interest he was taking in the widening of labour is reported and reviewed in journals from abroad writes his humorous play *Gorava Galad* ('Wrong at the Start'), publishes *Gauri Bahu* a collection of 352 songs in 1893 writes the poems of *Sonar Tari* ('The Golden Barge', published in 1894), *Chitra Galpa*, a collection of short stories (from *Hilabadi Nabajiban* and *Sadhana*) is published in 1894 and dedicated to the late B. J. Gupta

are at a loss what to do and can only cry. But no sooner is their hunger satisfied than they forget all their past sufferings.

"I know not whether the socialistic ideal of a more equal distribution of wealth is attainable but if not then such dispensation of Providence is indeed cruel, and man a truly unfortunate creature for it in this world misery must exist, so be it but let some little loop hole, some glimpses of possibility at least be left, which may serve to urge the nobler portion of humanity to hope and struggle unceasingly for its alleviation.

Educational Problems

CONDUCTS a remarkable correspondence with his friend Lokenath mainly on literary ideals and expression in *Sadhana* enters again in the pages of *Sadhana*



— Is Editor of the *Sadhana*
1894-95

into a vigorous controversy with Chandra Nath Bose over the latter's essay on the Hindu doctrine of nihility (*Maya-lalitwa*), which appeared in *Ban gabashi* composes his famous satiric poem, *Hing-tung-Chhat* (believed to be directed against the neo-Hindu reactionary group) writes on the comparative

word values in Sanskrit, Bengali and Hindi from the standpoint of cadence, sequence and symphony (his first essay on phonetics) is invited to speak on Education at a conference at Natore and writes *Shiksha Her Eka* ('The Fortuositities of Education' published in *Sadhana* 1892), in which he pleads for the acceptance of Bengali as the medium of instruction in our educational institutions—his views being endorsed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee Ananda Mohan Bose, Gnrunda Banerjee (later Vice Chancellor of Calcutta University) writes his short story masterpiece *Kabuliwala* in *Sadhana* commences his profoundly thought-provoking *Panchabhuter Diary* ('The Diary of the Five Elements') discoursing on life, literature and art proceeds to Cuttack by boat with Bilendranath Tagore from Cuttack goes to Puri visits Khandi Giri and Uday Giri at Bhudhikpur on his way to Balia the headquarters of the Orissa estates of the Tagores returns to Calcutta for a short stay and proceeds (by boat) to Sheldah practises drawing as an experiment of mood expression but finally returns to poetry, writes *Bidaya Abhisap* ('The Farwell Curse')

"Ingraj-o-Bharatbasi"

READS his famous political paper *Ingraj-o-Bharatbasi* ('Englishmen and Indians') in October, 1893 under the auspices of the Chaitanya Library in Calcutta with Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in the chair, three months

later writes in *Sadhana* on *Ingrajer Atanka* ('The Englishman's Fear') warning, *inter alia* the Congress against neglecting the potential value of Muslim unity evinces keen interest in the problems of cow-slaughter (then claiming attention all over India due to the intense agitation set afoot by Bal Gangadhar Tilak in Poona) writes a powerful article *Smicharer Idhika* ('The Right of Justice') published in *Sadhana* receives at Santiniketan Hamnergren a Swedish disciple of Rammohan Roy composes the first series of poems published in *Chitra* including the famous *Uraasi* visits Rajshahi to look up his friend Loken Palit (then posted there as Magistrate)

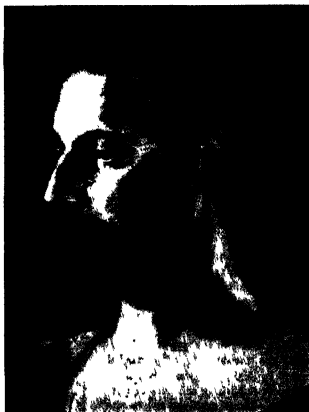
—After a postscript

Ibnandira Nath

Tagore 1894

A Turning Back

COMPOSES his famous poem *Irao* (*Irao Moray* ('Turn me away now')) a great call to turn back from a life of ease a mere poetical life to a life of struggle and realities—dedicated to the service of humanity discusses current political problems in a series of articles in *Sadhana* is engaged in reviewing a new edition of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's historical novel *Rajsingha* when he receives the news of his death (April 9 1894) followed by the deaths of Rajendra Lala Mitra and the poet Behari Lal Chakravarty who had in a large measure inspired some of his early poetry, comes to Calcutta to attend the memorial meeting in honour of Bankim, at which he pays a most remarkable tribute to the great man, writes on Bengali nursery rhymes and folk songs, drawing attention to this hitherto neglected branch of literature in a series of penetrating articles on some contemporary events expresses his indignation (in *Sadhana*) against the many manifestations of 'inferiority complex' in contemporary Indian society, is elected Foundation Vice-President of the Academy of Bengali Letters—*Bangiya Sahitya Parishad* (1894), takes over the editorial duties of *Sadhana* from Sudhindranath Tagore, his burning patriotism and strong indignation at some glaring instances of British official insolence find expression in his great story *Megh-o-Raudra* ('Sunshine and Shadow') and his article *Apamaner Pratika* ('Redressing Insults'), introduces Dwijendra Lal Roy (then an Excise Inspector at Dacca) to fame in literary Bengal through appreciative reviews (in *Sadhana*) of his humorous poems and his *Arya-Gatha*, seeks to set up a standard in Bengali literary criticism by writing critical reviews of contemporary publications in his own periodical



From the Tagore Collection

BIRTH of his youngest son Samin (born in November 1894) relieves himself of the burden of the *Sadhana* (which ceases publication in November 1895) enthusiastically plunges into business in partnership with his two young nephews Bilendranath and Surendranath Tagore who had started a store for Swedish goods in Calcutta and a firm for trading in jute at Kusthi writes a series of remarkable short stories beginning with *Kshudhita Pashan* ('Hungry Stones' 1895) publishes *Chhelaibhulana Chhara*, a collection of Bengali nursery rhymes in the *Sahitya Parishad Patika*, 1895 publishes a series of vigorous political writings, notably his essays *Abhaya*

(1896) writing the lyric-drama *Malini* in between the first collected edition (folio pp 476) of his poems published by his nephew Satya Prasad Ganguly on the 15th Aswin 1303 B E—Sept/Oct 1896 returns from Orissa to the banks of his favourite Padma in Calcutta and Shyampur composes for and sings at the twelfth session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta his famous song *For Bhubanamanohari* ('O thou chime of the world') composes the *Kalpna* group of poems writes *Bairanther Khata* (Bankim's Manuscript a comic play) reads a paper in tribute to Iswar Chandra Vidya-sagar (1820-1891) at a public gathering in Calcutta at his birth anniversary attends the Bengal Provincial Conference at Nator (April, 1897) held under the presidency of his brother Surendranath receives from Mohurrij Jagadindra Nath Roy of Nator (Chairman of the Reception Committee) support to his futile attempt to have the proceedings of the Conference conducted in Bengali the Conference broken up by the Great Earthquake of 1897, returning from Nator engages himself in writing a series of verse dialogues (*Gandharv Ivedan* ('The Appeal of Gandharv'), *Sati* ('The Sutee'), *Narak-las* ('Condemned to Hell'), *Lakshmur Pariksha* ('The Trial of Lakshmi')) sends a poem of greetings and encouragement to his life-long friend Jagadis Chandra Bose, who had then been demonstrating his scientific experiments in Europe is taken ill with neuritis, goes to Karmatar (Sonthal Parganas) for a change, proceeds to Simla and benefits considerably in health returns to Calcutta and takes editorial charge of the *Bharati* (1898-99)

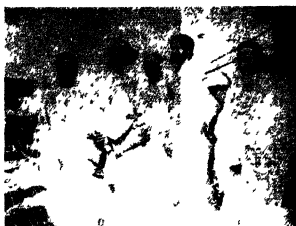


—When the first collected edition of his poems was published 1896
(Courtesy D. N. Majumdar)

Aseen ('The Insinuating Law'), writes his poem on *Jivan-Devala* ('The God of Life'), and another on *Nadi* ('The River'), which he dedicates to Bolendranath on the day of the latter's wedding composes the *Chaitali* ('The Last Harvest') group of poems, tours in Orissa in connection with the partitioning of the Tagore estates

RABINDRANATH TAGORI

—At the Bengal Provincial Conference, Calcutta in 1897 with the President, Satyendra Nath Tagore, and Mr P Chaudhuri

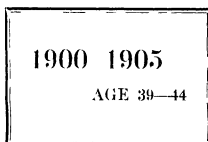


Court M. M. M. S. S.

Poetry and Polemics

WRITES strongly and indignantly against the reactionary policy of the Indian Government, particularly regarding the treatment meted out to Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who was arrested on a charge of publishing scurrilous articles in *Kesari* (alleged to have led to the murder of Mr Rind the Bombay Magistrate Officer and his friend Lt Averst in June, 1898) actively helps in raising funds for the defence of Tilak reads a paper entitled *Kantha Kodhi* ('Throttled') at a public meeting at the Calcutta Town Hall in protest against the new Sedition Bill (1898) writes on the outbreak of plague in Calcutta, warning the authorities against a repetition of Bombay measures which ended in the murder of Mr Rind helps Sister Nivedita in organizing relief for plague victims of this city attends the Dacca session of the Bengal Provincial Conference reading Bengali translation (by him) of the presidential address of the Rev Kailash Churn Banerjee strongly criticises the Imperial policy of dividing Bengal politically and culturally touching specially upon the cultural danger in the systematic displacement of the Bengali language from non-Bengali provinces like Assam and Orissa expresses himself freely on the topics of the day in such writings (in Bengali) as *Coal vs Chapkan* *Mulhoney vs Banerjee* referring to Raja Purna Mohan Mukherjee who held in contempt the Congress attitude towards the so-called natural rights of society and to Surendra Nath Banerjee who stood for the democratic ideals of the day shows up in *Kajjala* ('The Kingly Mirl') the mentality of some members of an English aristocracy living with one in their to top the subscription list for a memorial to an Anglo-Indian official welcomes Dimesh Chandra Sen's *Banga bhava O-Sahitya* (History of Bengali Literature) in an appreciative review in *Bharati* actively assists in raising funds for the Bengali poet Him Chandra Banerjee who had gone blind publishes the verse-epigram *Kanika* (1899) takes a firm hand with dishonest officers in the jute business

(who took advantage of Rabindranath's illness) and winds it up taking upon himself the entire financial liabilities death of Rabindranath Tagore Aug 22 1899



PUBLISHES in 1900 *Kantha* (Lies and Billies) chronicling the deeds of lawless and martyrdom in Rupa

Maratha and Sikh history,—all seeking to inspire a spirit of deep patriotism and pride in the nation's storied past, dedicates it to his friend, Jagadis Chandra Bose, writes *Kahini* ('Tales') dedicated to another friend of his—the Maharaja Sri Radhikishore Deva-Mamika Bahadur of Tipperah publishes *Kalpna* ('Fantasies') dedicated to Sris Chandra Mazumdar *Ashanka* ('The Fleeting One') dedicated to Loken Palit marries his eldest daughter, Madhurilata (Bela) to Sarat Chandra Chakravarty, son of the late Port Beharilal Chakravarty (1900), requested by his niece Sarita Devi (then editing *Bharati*) to contribute a humorous play writes his famous comedy *Chitra Kanai Satha* ('The Bachelors' Club')—a veiled protest in the lightest vein against the ideology of many contemporary youths whose imagination happened to be on fire with a monastic call for eccliate lives the play is written at Shieldh the Poet finishing it in two days, writing day and night within closed doors living on breads only bringing the Miss to Calcutta to hand it over to the editor, falls down in a faint when going up the stairs to his rooms in the Jorishanko house

'Bangadarshan' and Santiniketan

REVIVES with the help of his friend Sris Chandra Mazumdar, launches his famous monthly journal



With a group of friends in Calcutta 1900

Front row Left to right—Upendra Kisor Ray Choudhury (J. Ray), artist and author, Prayana Sen man of letters, Bankuntha Nath Das (Editor, *Prabip*)
Back row RABINDRANATH, Pramatha Nath Ray Chaudhuri, poet, Narendranath Gupta, RUPINATH CHAKRAVARTY

I CHRONICLE OF EIGHTY YEARS

Bangadashan, and takes editorial charge (1901), with him are associated, as regular contributors, Akshay Kumar Maitra, Bipin Chandra Pal, Chandrasekhar Mukhopadhyaya at the head of a group of brilliant writers, writes a vigorous protest against the insolence of British Imperialism in South Africa as manifested in the Boer War, composes the poems of *Naitidya* (a remarkable exposition, in verse, of the ancient Hindu ideals and philosophy of life), reads the poems at one sitting to his father Maharshi Debendranath, who gives him his blessings and a purse towards the expenses of its publication (1901), comes in contact with Padhyaya Brahmanandhab through common association with Bangadashan in which the Poet deplores the evil influences which tend to "make all cultures, Western or Indian, seem unnatural", dilates upon the historic foundations of Hindu culture, opposes in a series of remarkable articles the blind imitation of the West whose strength, however he recognizes begins (in *Bangadashan*) "the first psychological novel" in Bengali, (*chokhe*) *Bali* ('The Presore'), marries his second daughter (Renuka) to Dr. Satendra Nath Bhat tacharya (since deceased)

RELINQUISHES the management of the Tagore estates and comes with his family to stay at Santiniketan (1901), establishes, with his father's glad consent, *Balpur Brahmacharya* at Santiniketan (December 22, 1901), a school on the pattern of the old Indian *Asrama*,—himself teaching the boys, joining in their games, entertaining them with stories, living with them, and thus exercising a profound influence on their mind, with him are associated, as the first batch of teachers, Jagadananda Roy, Lawrence (an Englishman), Rewachand (a Sindh Christian, who afterwards became Swami Anumananda) and Pandit Subdhan Vidyanava, passes through extreme financial difficulties, having to allocate the major portion of his allowance from the family estate to liquidate the debts of the jute business and the heavy expenses of running the school, has to sell his house on the sea at Puri, his valuable library, while his wife cheerfully parts with all her ornaments and jewellers to help her husband in tiding over the crisis*. Unadhyaya

* How the Poet paid back his huge debt is told by the well known Bengali literary man, Indendra Kumar Roy in his article on Kalindranath in the *Maasi* *Basumat* or *Bhadra* 1368 B. E. (Aug. Sept., 1941) Mr Roy writes

দ্ব্যবসায় বাসোয় অত্যন্ত অধিক কতি-
প্রত ইষ্টা পৈতৃক অধিবাসীর আর হইতে পাটের
বাসোয়ের ধন পরিশোধ করিতে থাকেন। এ
কিন্তু তিনি বোধ হয় সাধনা লাভের আশায়

Brahmanandhab joins the Santiniketan School, the Poet attends to his editorial duties of *Bangadashan* added to the heavy work in connection with the school, propounds Pan-Asiatic ideas in the course of an appreciative review of Lowell Dickinson's *Letters of John Chinaman* reads two papers on 'Bengali Language and Literature' and 'The History of India at the weekly discussion meetings (*Hochona Samiti*) conducted by Messrs. Marumdar Brothers publishers of *Bangadashan*, joins in the country-wide agitation against Lord Curzon's unwarranted attack on the veracity of Eastern people in his Convocation address at Calcutta University (15th February 1902),* writes trenchantly on the Viceregal performance, quoting devastatingly from Herbert Spencer's "Facts and Comments" instances of England's living propaganda against the Boers in South Africa

Sorrows and Sufferings

SERIOUS illness of his wife necessitates her removal to Calcutta. She dies on the 7th *Igrahayana*, 1309 B. E. (November 23 1902), returns to Santiniketan with Rathindranath (aged 14), Mira (aged 10) and Samindranath (aged 8) composes *Smitan* ('In Memory') a series of moving poems

নিশিগম—আগশে ভাল দেখিয়া তাবা ধবাই
ঈশ্বর বাবসা—অতএব

"ধাকপে হোয়ার পাটের হাতে
মরু নুও শিশু সা।"

যে বুঝাছিল কবিরের হৃদয়টি পৈতৃক
জন্মদায়ী অস্তিত্ব, সেই নম্রাখ্যায়িন অধিবাসী
মরু নুও শিশু সা। প্রতিষ্ঠাপন বাবসারী
ছিলে। বাজসারী জিলায় আদ্যোপাৎ যেরূপ
দৈনন্দিন কিছু দূরে হোয়ারের যে জন্মদায়ী
কাহারী আছে, তাহাও এলাকাভিত্তিক কোন
গ্রামের একজন ধন্য অধিবাসীর নিকট কবির
পাটের বাবসায়েব গ্রন্থ এক লক্ষ টাকা কল্ল
করিয়াছিলেন। নগদাতা ঈশ্বরের কবি
অধিবাসকে এতট বিবাস করিতে যে, তিনি
কোন দিলপত্র না লভ্য কেবল যুগের কথা এক
লক্ষ টাকা ধার দিয়াছিলেন। কবিরের অধিবাসী
পরিবার উপলক্ষে ঈশ্বর কাহারিতে গমন
করিত বৃদ্ধ মহাজন সাহায্য ঈশ্বর কাহারিতে
ঈশ্বরিত ইষ্টা হইতে প্রণয় করিয়া অরণ
কাহারী ছিলেন, টাকাটা আর কয়েক সপ্তাহ
পকেই তামাদি হইবে। কবিরের হাস্য। বিবাসি-
ছিলেন, "ভ্রমলোক যে টাকা ধার করেন—তা
কি কখন তামাদি হইতে পারে? তুমি নিশ্চিন্ত
থাক, বেগী।"—যে সময়ে তামাদি হইবার কথা
তাহার কয়েক দিন পকেই কবিরের এই ধন
পরিশোধ করেন। তাহার উত্তমই পরামর্শকে
চিন্তন, কিন্তু দেশের যে অবস্থা, কিছু দিন
লগ্ন এ সকল কথা উপাধার পণ্ডিত হইবে।

* Lord Curzon had said inter alia

"If I were asked to sum in a single word the most notable characteristic of the East—physical, intellectual and moral—as compared with the West, the word exaggeration or extravagance is the one that I should employ. It is particularly patent on the surface of the Native Press."

dedicated to the memory of his departed consort

SATISH Chandra Roy, a young Bengali poet of great promise, joins Santiniketan as a teacher, sudden illness of his second daughter Renuka, takes her for a change first to Hazaribagh and then to Almora, here he composes the poems of *Sita* ('The Child') with which he used to entertain his motherless young boy Samudra is compelled to return to Santiniketan on important work, hurries back to Almora on receipt of a wire announcing Renuka's condition to be precarious—walking all the way from Kathgodam as no dandi or horse was available, brings her down to Calcutta, summons his son-in-law (Renuka's husband) from England by cable, Renuka dies (May 1903), within six months from her mother's death, maintains uninterrupted his editorial duties, regularly contributing the instalments of his novel *Noukadubi* ('The Wreck') to *Bangadashan* writes *Raj-kutumba* ('The King's Kinsmen'), *Ghuso-Ghuso* ('Blow for Blow') *Dharmabodhi* *Distanta* ('Righteousness Exemplified'),—all contributions of political import, dealing with the divine right of man to oppose injustice even to the extent of meeting force by force, reads a paper on *Dharma-prachar* ('Preaching Religion') at the old City College hall and creates a flutter in the devotees of the Brahmo Samaj who read in it an attack on its missionary activities

SATISH Chandra Roy dies of small-pox at Santiniketan (February 1, 1904) the school removed temporarily to Shichah Prof Mohit Chandra Sen joins the school as a teacher and brings out *Kabya-grantha*, the second collected edition of Tagore's poetical works in 9 volumes the Poet protests in *Bangadashan* against 'patriotism fashioned in Western mould', reads his famous essay on *Swadeshi Samaj*, stressing the need for constructive nationalism, at a special meeting of the Chaitanya Library Association at Minerva Theatre (July 22, 1904) with Ramesh C. Dutt in the chair, reads it again at Curzon Theatre, following this essay prepares a complete scheme (September, 1904) for the reorganization of the Indian society on the basis of self-help with the village as the centre, the revival of cottage industries to help to remove the poverty of the masses with the co-operation of the peasant himself, the reduction of the senseless extravagance at socio-

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

MRINALINI DEBI

The Poet's wife died in 1902, and to her memory he dedicated a series of deeply touching poems. *Samaran*

religious ceremonies, the establishment of groups of voluntary workers, striving for an understanding between Hindus and Muslims,—all under the leadership of a chosen 'leader of society' (*samar-pati*) enthusiastically supports the movement set afoot in Calcutta for honouring the memory of the great founder of the Mahatma cult. Sri Sriyaji by holding a festival (1904) writes his famous poem *Sriyaji Utsab* and reads it at the Calcutta Town Hall protests however against the public worship of Bhawanji is a part of the festival is likely to threaten non-Hindu feelings, writes several school books the late Dr. Rabindranath Tagore writing the preface to one of them (*Ingrau Sopan*), which introduces for the first time, the 'direct method' of teaching English in Bengal.

and miscellaneous essays etc. to the proprietors of the Bengali weekly newspaper *Hilabadi* who collect these in one volume with the title *Rabindra-granthabali* (1920) addresses a great meeting of students held under the auspices of *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad* at the Classic Theatre in Calcutta urging them to organize the villages,* criticises the findings of an Education Commission (consisting of four Europeans and one Indian, K. G. G. Gupta) recommending the division of Bengali text books into four dialectal groups early in 1905 takes up the editorial charge of a new Bengali monthly *Bhandar* published by Kedari Nath Das Gupta, creates in the pages of the new journal a forum for discussion of the burning ques-

tions of the day,* visits Agartala at the invitation of the *Tripura Sahitya Sammilani* and reads a paper on *Deshiya Raya* ('Indian States') appealing to Indian princes to encourage and patronise indigenous arts and crafts and stop the inroads of foreign luxury-products, actively helps, in association with Okakura and Sister Nivedita, in the foundation of the new Bengal School of Indian Art sponsored by R. B. Havell and Abanindranath Tagore,† establishes weaving schools and hand-looms in Calcutta and elsewhere (mainly in his estates), contributes to *Bhanda* a remarkable analysis of the Imperialist policy of economic exploitation of India in *Raja-Praja* ('The King and his People'), Ajit Chakraverti joins the Santiniketan School as a teacher.

The High Priest of Swadeshi

FOLLOWING the official announcement of Lord Curzon's decision to divide Bengal into two separate provinces in spite of the united opposition of Bengal and the great meeting of protest at the Calcutta Town Hall (and meetings all over the province) on August 7, 1905 declaring, as a retaliatory measure, a boycott of British goods, Rabindranath reads a paper entitled *Bastha-O-Bhastha* ('The Situation and Solution') at a meeting at the Town Hall (August 25, 1905) organized by the conductors of *New India* the English weekly edited by Bipin Chandra Pal the paper is "repeated" at the Albert Theatre within a week emphasises, once again, the need of organizing the villages, indicating a programme of constructive non-co-operation, throws himself into a fierce blaze of activity his "passionate patriotism" finding vent in a large number of national songs* ranging over the entire gamut of patriotic emotions resounding all over Bengal addresses, frequently, great mass meetings moving thousands by the magic of his words and thus becomes the high priest of the Swadeshi Movement and one of the leading exponents of the new gospel of Nationalism along with Bipin Chandra Pal and Anandmo Ghose.

* One such question was raised by the late Surendranath Banerjee (then the accredited leader of Bengal) as to the best means of establishing contact of the masses with public movements. The matter was discussed intensively, among the participants being N. N. Ghosh, Harendra Nath Dutta, J. Chaudhuri, Ramendra Sunder Prasad, Prithwish Chandra Roy, Bipin Chandra Pal and others.

† In the Bengali *Santiniketan Patrika* ('Santiniketan Magazine') of the month of Jyaishta, 1333 B.E., published fifteen years ago, Dr. Abanindranath Tagore, the famous artist, described how his uncle Rabindranath was instrumental in leading him to evolve his own style of indigenous art summing up, Abanindranath writes:

"Bengal's poet suggested the lines of Art Bengal's artist (i.e. Abanindranath himself) continued to work along those lines for many a day." (Translation.)

* Said the Poet on this occasion:—

"The downtrodden and the despoiled who have become callous to insults and oblivious of even the rights of their humanity must be taught the meaning of the word 'brother' teach them to be strong and to protect themselves, for that is the only way. Take each of you charges of some village and organise it. Educate the villagers and show them how to put forward their united strength. Look not for fame or praise in this undertaking. Do not expect even the gratitude of those for whom you would give your life, but be prepared rather for their opposition."

DEATH occurs of the poet's father the "Maharshi" Debendra Nath Tagore, at the age of 87 (6th Magh 1311 B.P. 19th January, 1905) at the Jorasanko house in Calcutta, shortly before this the Poet sells, for Rs. 2,000 only the right of publishing in a single edition his short stories three of his novels, six of his plays, all his songs, some literary criticisms—

I CHRONICLE OF FIFTY YEARS



With Mohit Chandra Sen, Satish Chandra Roy and pupils of the Santiniketan School, 1904

Initiates "Rakhibandhan"

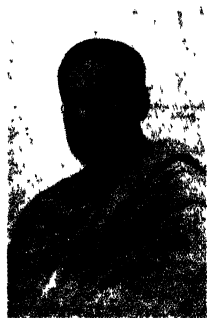
TO COMMEMORATE October 16, 1905 (30th Aswin, 1912 B.E.) the day the Partition of Bengal was given effect to—the Poet initiates the *Rakhibandhan* ceremony symbolising the undying unity of divided Bengal, composes the great *Rakhi* song (*Bangla Mati Banglar Jal*) invoking Divine blessings on Bengal and leads a huge procession, singing the song, to the Prasanna Kumar Tagore Ghat for a ceremonial bath in

the Ganges, followed by the exchange and fastening of the *Rakhi*-thread as a badge and symbol of fraternal unity, no food is cooked in Bengali households, no shop is opened in Calcutta that day as planned by the Poet, the same afternoon at the great meeting at Upper Circular Road where the late Ananda Mohan Bose (President Madras Congress, 1896) lays the foundation of the proposed Federation Hall, translates into Bengali the memorable presidential address of Ananda Mohan leads, after the meeting, a huge pro-

cession through the streets of the city singing his song, *Bidhir bandhan kabhey tumi cinni saktiman?* ("Are you so powerful that you can cut asunder the God-made bond that binds us?") to the house of Pashupati Bose at Bagh bazar where, in the large compound, he addresses a mammoth gathering appealing for contribution to a 'National Fund'—Rs. 50,000 being raised on the spot.

For "National Education"

FREQUENTLY attends and addresses the large number of protest meetings following the Bengal Government (Curlye) Circular forbidding students from attending political meetings or singing the *Bande Mataram* under penalty of rustication, addresses large gatherings, mainly of students at Beadon Square and the Field and Academy grounds of members (students) of the Dawn Society."



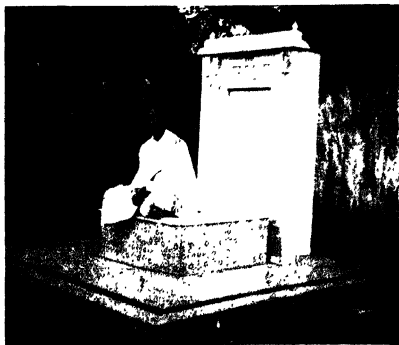
Rabindranath after his father's death, ceremony, 1905



The family gathered at Mahasweta Debendranath Tagore's death anniversary at the Jorasanko House.
Back row (from left to right)—Gaganendra, Abimandya, Samarendra, Dwipendra, Somendra, Satya Prasad.
Middle row (from left to right)—Jyotirindra, Dwijendra, Surendra, Satyendra, Sudhindra.
Front row (from left to right)—Dinendra, Rabindra, Samindra, Arunendra, Rathindra, Krittindra.

founded by Satish Chandra Mukherjee delivers a striking address at the *Bijoya* gathering at Pashupati Bose's house takes a leading part in the establishment of the National Council of Education Bengal which sought to provide education on 'national lines' to students expelled from Government or Government-aided institutions for political misdemeanour and others is well contributes to *Bhandari* a critical survey (*Raj-Bhakti* 'Loyalty') of the situation arising out of the visit of the late King George V in December 1905 as Prince of Wales and the Resolution of Welcome adopted by the Indian National Congress meeting at Benares under Gokhale.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.



1905

1906 1911

AGE 45 50

PAYS a remarkable tribute to the brave victims of police oppression in different parts of the new province (Bast Bengal) in pursuance of the policy initiated by its new L.A. Governor, Sir Rampfelde Buller (Bhandar, March 1906), sends his eldest son Rathindranath with Santosh Chandra (the son of his old friend Sris Chandra Mazumdar) to America via Japan to study agriculture, is invited to preside over the first session of *Bangya Sahitya Sammilani* (Bengali Literary Conference) at Barisal called along with the Provincial (Political) Conference, returns to Calcutta when both the functions had to be abandoned because of the political situation, relinquishes the editorship of *Bangadarshan*, pleads to the unanimous acceptance of Surendra Nath Banerjee as the one accredited leader for conducting the national struggle, in the course of a paper entitled *Deshanayak* ('The Country's Leader') in which the Poet deplored the split in Bengal politics ('Moderates' vs. 'Extremists') and observed that a trained general was needed at the head of an army engaged in war,—thus seeking to consolidate the discipline of the people in personal allegiance to a single individual

ACCCEPTS the task of drawing up a comprehensive programme of work for the National Council of Education and reads his paper *Shiksha-Samasya* ('The Problem of Education') in Overton Hall, Calcutta (June, 1906), writes a series of articles beginning with *Shiksha-Samasya* and ending with *Falah-Kim* ('What Next?'), publishes the poems of *Khyay* (July 1906), dedicating these to Jagadish Chandra Bose, takes a leading part at the inaugural meeting (August 14, 1906) of the *Jalpa Shiksha Parishad* (National Council of Education) and delivers under its auspices a series of lectures explaining the scope and function of Literature, speaks at the Literary Conference held at Bhowanipore simultaneously with the Congress Exhibition in Calcutta (December, 1906), presides, next year, at the adjourned session of Bengali Literary Conference, *Bangya Sahitya Sammilani* convened at Cossimbazar (Berhampore) by the late Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nundy

From Turmoil to Peace

DISAPPROVES of the line the national movement was taking, tires of increasing party squabbles, is perturbed at the growing alienation between Hindus and Muslims; disillusionment as much as temperamental conflicts lead the Poet to seek escape and retreat at Santiniketan; writes in *Prabasi* (edited by Ramananda Chatterjee from Allahabad) *Byadhi-O-Jahar-Pialikar* ('The Disease and its Cure') striking a note of dissent in the poli-

tical thinking of the time; advocates a 'change of heart' and 'inner purification' and the acceptance of a radical social programme as absolutely essential for the attainment of real independence; is severely criticised for his sudden withdrawal from political activities; Ramendra Sundar Trivedi, one of his foremost friends and admirers, replies to the *Prabasi* article (referred to above); follows one of the most fertile periods of his creative life, giving the world undying literary gifts; publishes (August 24, 1907) his famous poem, *Aurobindo*, *Rabindrei Iaho Namaskar* ('I salute thee, Aurobindo') hailing Aurobindo Ghose prosecuted on a charge of writing seditious articles in the new Nationalist daily *Bande Mataram* edited by him; marries his youngest daughter Mira to Nagendra Nath Ganguly and sends his son-in-law also to America to study Agriculture, makes over to the school at Santiniketan the proceeds of a new collected edition of his prose works published by the Mazumdar Library

DEATH occurs suddenly of his youngest son, Samindranath, from cholera, at Monghyr (November, 1907), writes out regularly, in instalments, his great novel, *Gora*, for *Prabasi*; is persuaded to preside over the Bengal Provincial (Political) Conference meeting at Pabna (January, 1908), delivers his address in Bengal,—the Conference taking place amidst the agitated atmosphere created by the unhappy split at the Surat Congress in December, 1907, again, in this address, he calls upon his countrymen for constructive work—and suggests that our young men should form themselves into bands of workers who should go round the villages, bring together Hindus and Muslims in fruitful work, confer with and help the villagers in starting schools, making roads and supplying drinking water and the like.

The East and The West

READS a paper (25th May, 1908) at the Chaitanya Library entitled *Path-O-Pathya* ('The Way and the Wherewithal') touching upon the tragic incident at Muzaffarpore (the first bomb-outrage in Bengal: March 31, 1908) and the discovery of the bomb factory at Manicktolla, Calcutta (May 2, 1908) leading to the arrest of Barindra Kumar Ghose and his associates; recognises in these outbursts the result of the policy of repression pursued by



1906

From a Photo taken
r. Calcutta

Engraved & Printed by
Bharat Photo-type Studio

By
The Late Sukumar Roy

Government but warns his countrymen against such fatal expressions of natural exasperation, not withholding, at the same time, his tribute to the heroic spirit of self-sacrifice displayed by these young men, who had, the Poet felt, wiped out the reproach of cowardice levelled at Bengalis; writes another article entitled *Sadupaya* ('The Honest Way') in *Prabasi* (Sraban : 1315 B.E., July 1908) examining the genesis of the Hindu-Muslim dispute, which was being steadily fostered by an interested third party; addresses the students assembled at the Sadharan Brahma Samaj on the historic significance of the meeting of the East and the West in India (*Purba-O-Pashchim* : *Prabasi*, Bhadra, 1315 B.E.).

The Songs of "Gitanjali"

CREATES an exquisite drama *Saradotsab* (1908) and has it staged by the staff and students of Santiniketan, himself appearing in the role of the 'Sannyasi'; death occurs of his old friend, Sris Chandra Majumdar; delivers a series of sermons at Santiniketan; writes his first autobiographical sketch for *Bangabhasar Lekhak* ('Writers in the Bengali Language') published by the *Bangabasi* Office; D. L. Roy creates a furore in Bengali literary circles by attacking in the Press and periodicals Tagore's alleged "obscurity" and "immorality"; he (Tagore) ignores the attack; later, at the request of Sailes Majumdar (then Editor, *Bangadarshan*), he gives his opinion on D. L. Roy's criticisms; publishes a play, entitled



—As President of the first session of the 'Bangiya Sahitya Sammilan'—Bengali Literary Conference held in 1907

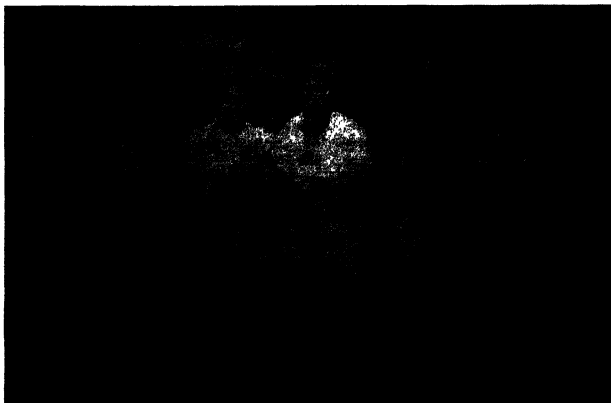
Prayaschitta ('Atonement') in which he inculcates the philosophy of *Satyagraha* in the characterisation of 'Dhuananjay Bairagi'; stages the play at Santiniketan with himself in the leading role; occupies himself at Shelidah mainly with the songs of *Gitanjali*; comes to Calcutta (November, 1909) to receive his son, Rathindranath, returned from America after three years; takes Rathindranath with him on a boat-tour through his North-Bengal *Zemindari*; returns to Calcutta and reads a paper, *Tapoban* ('The Hermitage') at the

A CHRONICLE OF EIGHTY YEARS

Overtown Hall; delivers his famous sermon, *Viswabodh* on the anniversary of the Brahma Samaj (11th Magh, 1316 B.E.); marries his son, Rathindranath, three days later, to Pratima Devi, a widowed girl connected with the Tagores and dedicates the novel *Gora* to him (January, 1910); publishes the allegorical play *Raja* (December, 1910); attends and speaks at a Literary Conference at Bhagalpore; the first English translation of one of his short stories (*Hungry Stones*) by Pannalal Bose (later, Judge, Bhawal case) published in the *Modern Review*, Feb., 1940; at the request of Mr. Ramananda Chatterjee, the first English translations of two of his poems by Mr. Loken Palit, I.C.S., are published in the *Modern Review* for May and September, 1911—"The Fruitless Cry" and "The Death of a Star".

Fiftieth Birth-Anniversary

FIFTIETH Birth-Anniversary celebrated at Santiniketan with great solemnity (May 7, 1911); on this occasion is staged the Poet's *Raja* ('The King of the Dark Chamber') with himself in the role of 'Thakurda'; reads to friends and admirers assembled at the time the memoirs of his youth; Ajit Chakraverti reads his essay on Rathindranath, one of the first attempts at an interpretative estimate of the Poet; goes to Shelidah and revises his reminiscences, which appear in the *Prabasi* serially as *Jibansmriti* (translated into English in 1917); also writes *Achalayatan*, a prose-play depicting the tyranny of fossilised ortho-



—With his newly-wedded son and daughter-in-law: 1910

From left to right : Mira Devi, the youngest daughter; Rathindranath, the eldest son; THE POET; Pratima Devi, the daughter-in-law; Bela Devi, the eldest daughter.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

doxy eternally hampering human progress, the play, when published in the *Prabasi*, provokes violent opposition from traditionalists, returning to Calcutta after the rains reads a paper on *Dharma* *Itiha* (Meaning of Religion) at the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj Hall in reply to the critics of his *Ichalaya* *tan*; reads another paper warmly supporting the proposed Hindu University at a meeting organised by Chintamani Lalbari at the Ripon College Hall with Ashutosh Chaudhuri in the chair. Anand Coomaraswamy comes on a visit to Santiniketan and in collaboration with Apte Chakraverty translates into English some poems of Tagore, writes *Dab Ghar* (Post Office), a three-act play of poignance and pathos; various prose writings are published in *Lat* *abodhin* *Patila* (of which he was then Editor), the *Prabasi* and the *Bharati*; in December composes, at the request of Ashutosh Chaudhuri for the twenty-sixth session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta, his famous national song *Jana gana mana adhinaya* a later sung at the annual *Maghotsa* a festival at the Jorasanko house.

1912-1918

AGE 51-57

—When *Gitanjali* (Song offerings) was published in England

From the
1912-1918

Courtesy D N Mastry

The Country's Homage

At the Town Hall, in Calcutta on January 28, 1912 a great public meeting is held under the auspices of the *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad* (Academy of Bengali Letters) at which the Poet is presented, on his completing the fiftieth year of his life, with a remarkable address written and read by Ramesh Sundar Trivedi acknowledging in glowing words his great and unique contribution to every department of Bengali literature,* the *Parishad* also starts a special fund in his name for the promotion of original research work in

Bengali reads at the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj Priver Hall a paper on *Atma parichaya* (Self-introduction) in which he maintains that Brahms are but Hindus and deprecates the separatist conceit which keeps the two communities apart is vigorously criticised by the *Lat* *alamudi* (the organ of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj), delivers a lecture at the Overtown Hall on *Bharatbarshi* *Itihaser* *Dhara* (The Main Currents of Indian History) maintaining that the great mission of *Bharatbarshi* was to unite all the conflicting elements gathered in this ancient land and create a rare synthesis to her glory and the benefit of mankind the Government of East Bengal and Assam issues confidential circulars that the institution of Santiniketan was 'altogether unsuitable for

the education of the sons of Government servants", is mortified at many guardians and parents removing their wards from Santiniketan, where at that time arrives Myron H Phelps an American lawyer, who publishes a glowing account of the human values of the teaching afforded at this institution, decides to go to Europe to acquaint the world at large with his educational institution and also to study the co-operative system in Denmark, receives at about the same time a request from his friends, Bhai Promotto Loll Sen and Brajendra Nath Seal then in England to go there and meet some of the leading English intellectuals, suddenly falls ill on the night before his departure (March, 1912) and has to postpone his visit, his luggage going as far as Madras, goes to Shelidah and convalesces there translating into English some of his songs and poems is advised to undertake a journey to Europe to reconsp his health, sails with his son, Rathindranath, and daughter-in-law, Pratima Devi, from Bombay on the 27th May, 1912, on his third visit to Europe translates more of his poems on board the boat

* It was an unparalleled ovation,—the first time that such an honour has been done to a literary man in India. The meeting at the Town Hall was the most representative crowded and enthusiastic of gatherings that have ever filled that historic hall. From childhood to old age, all ages and both sexes were represented there. Representatives of culture and high birth and wealth met there. High spirituality was there. Science and industry were there. Philosophy and forensic ability poets and the ancient learning of the land were there. Literature had her many votaries there. The goddesses of music and painting had sent there some

of her foremost worshippers. Nor was statesmanship left unrepresented and there mustered strong in their thousands, the youth of Bengal her rising hope with enthusiasm writ large on their shining foreheads" (*The Modern Review* March, 1912)

Europe and "Gitanjali"

ARRIVES in London on June 16, 1912, puts up in a hotel from where he gets into touch with William Rothenstein, the celebrated English painter, who had met the Poet at

Abanindra Nath Tagore's house on a visit to India some years ago, receives warm welcome from Rothenstein to whom he shows the English translations of his poems. Rothenstein, deeply impressed, has copies typed and sends them to Yeats, Stopford

Brooke and Bradley, all of whom are enthusiastic in their praise of the poems. Rothenstein arranges a reading at his house, where before Max Sinclair, Evelyn Underhill, Ernest Rhys, Fox-Strangways, Charles Trevelyan, Ezra Pound, Alice Meynell,

RABINDRANATH TAGORE IN LONDON IN 1912-13

[From "MEN AND MEMORIES: RECOLLECTIONS OF WILLIAM ROTHENSTEIN", 1900-1922]

It happened, in "The Modern Review", upon a translation of a story signed Rabindranath Tagore, which charmed me, I wrote to Jorasanko—were other such stories to be had? Sometime afterwards came an exercise book containing translations of poems by Rabindranath, made by Ajit Chakravarty, a schoolmaster on the staff at Bolpur. The poems, of a highly mystical character, struck me as being still more remarkable than the story, though but rough translations. Meanwhile I met one of the Kooch Behar family, Promotto Loll Sen, a sauntly man, and a Brahmo of course. He brought to our house Dr Brajendranath Seal, then on a visit to London, a philosopher with a brilliant mind and a child-like character. They both wrote to Tagore, urging him to come to London, he would meet, they said, at our house and elsewhere, men after his heart. Then news came that Rabindranath was on his way. I eagerly awaited his visit. At last he arrived, accompanied by two friends, and by his son. As he entered the room he handed me a notebook in which, since I wished to know more of his poetry, he had made some translations during his passage from India. He begged that I would accept them.

That evening I read the poems. Here was poetry of a new order which seemed to me on a level with that of the great mystics. Andrew Bradley, to whom I showed them, agreed. 'It looks as though we have at last a great poet among us again,' he wrote.

I sent words to Yeats, who failed to reply, but when I wrote again he asked me to send him the poems, and when he had read them his enthusiasm equalled mine. He came to London and went carelessly through the poems, making here and there a suggestion, but leaving the original little changed.

For a long time Yeats was occupied with Tagore. 'I have been writing lyric poetry in Normandy. I wish I could have got down to you for I find Tagore and you are a great inspiration in my own art. Thank you for asking me,' he said in a letter.

Tagore's dignity and handsome presence, the ease of his manners and his quiet wisdom made a marked impression on all who met him. One of the first persons whom Tagore wanted to know was Stopford Brooke, for Tagore, being a prominent member of the Brahmo Samaj, which was closely allied to Unitarianism, had heard much of him and of Estlin Carpenter. Stopford Brooke asked me to bring Tagore to Manchester Square, 'but tell him',

he said, 'that I am not a spiritual man.' I think the dear old man, with his love of beautiful surroundings and of the good things of life, was a little nervous of Tagore's purity and asceticism, as it appeared to him, and when we sat down at the Brookes' generous table, though the talk might be of angels, Stopford must be true to himself. 'You and I', he said to my wife, 'are going to drink champagne.' But how could any one not love Stopford Brooke, with his delight in nature's sumptuousness?

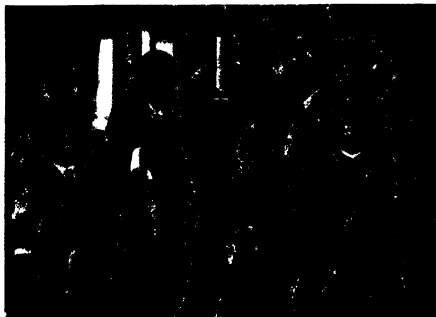
Of course, the two men became great friends. Now Tagore wanted to meet Hudson, for he had read *Gitanjali* *Mansions*, it was his favourite modern book, he said, and then to the Temple, to a party at the Woods'—for Woods was now Master of the Temple, where Margaret Woods, with her gracious presence and lovely mind, was a centre of attraction.

The young poets came to sit at Tagore's feet, Ezra Pound the most assiduously. Among others whom Tagore met were Shaw, Wells, Galsworthy, Andrew Bradley, Maschfield, J. L. Hammond, Ernest Rhys, Fox-Strangways, Sturge Moore, and Robert Bridges. Tagore, for his part, was struck by the breadth of view and the rapidity of thought that he found among his new friends. 'Those who know the English only in India, do not know Englishmen,' he said.

George Calderon dramatised one of his stories, *The Maharani of Arakan*, the play was acted at the Albert Hall Theatre when it fell to me to introduce Tagore to his first English audience. Meanwhile Tagore was translating some of his own plays, one of which, *The Post Office*, was acted later in Dublin. A beautiful edition of this play was printed by Miss Yeats at the Cuala Press. I most admired *Chitra*, and next to this *The King of the Dark Chamber*, which he read one evening to a number of friends at our Hampstead house. We asked George Moore, among others, to hear Tagore. Moore was curious, but, except for A. L., suspicious of idealists.

I don't think Moore and Tagore ever met, I could not readily imagine them together, nor could Shaw come to hear the play read. But they did meet, though I was away when the Shaws came to dinner. My wife told me that Shaw was rather outrageous, while his wife was all admiration—'Old bluebeard', said Shaw to mine while he was leaving, 'how many wives has he got, I wonder?' Nearly 20 years later, at a reception given to Tagore by Evelyn Wrench and Yeats-Brown, the two met again, now white-headed and white bearded, and sat and talked together, two noble-looking elders.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE



—At the house of William Rothenstein in London in 1912
 Seated (from left to right) — The late Somendra Dev-Varma of Tipperah,
 J. B. Puri, his son Rahnulmrith
 Standing (from left to right) — Dr. D. N. Maitra, William Rothenstein
 with his son

Courtesy D. N. Maitra

Henry Nevinston and other William Butler Yeats reads the poems which create a profound impression here for the first time, the Poet meets Charles Andrews, then a missionary attached to Cambridge Brotherhood and working as a Professor at St. Stephens College, Delhi.

Attends an "At Home" arranged in his honour by the "Union of East & West Club" on July 19, at the Trocadero Hotel, the authorities of the celebrated English weekly *The Nation*, give a big party with a view to introducing the Poet to the leading English intellectuals of the day, leaves London to stay amidst pure English rural surroundings and goes to Butterton in Staffordshire as the guest of a son of General Outram of the Sepoy Mutiny fame, returning from Staffordshire goes to another English village, Chalford in Gloucestershire, returning to London, meets Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Stopford Brooke, John Masefield, Lewis Dickinson, Bertrand Russell, John Galsworthy, Robert Bridges, Sturge Moore and others. K. C. Sen translates into English the drama *Raja* ("The King of the Dark Chamber") while Debabrata Mukherji translates his *Dalghar* ("Post-Office")—both revised by the Poet in September purchases from Col. N. P. Sinha (Lord Sinha's brother) an old *nikkuthi* (indigo-planter's bungalow) with extensive grounds at Surul, a village lying three miles from Santiniketan (the present seat of the Rural Reconstruction Centre of Visva-Bharati).

First Visit to America

SAILS for America (accompanied by Dr. D. N. Maitra) and reaches New York on October 27, 1912, pro-



W. B. Yeats who wrote the Introduction to "Gitanjali"
 Courtesy D. N. Maitra

Writes William Rothenstein in his *Recollections*

Yeats generously offered to write an introduction he had previously gone carefully through the translations, realising Tagore's expressive English too much to do more than make slight changes here and there. Indeed, Yeats was as keen over the issue of the book of poems as he would have been over a selection of his own lovely verses. He wrote to me

September 7, 1912

My dear Rothenstein

I sent the text and book to Tagore yesterday, and I expect my essay (Introduction to *Gitanjali*) back from my typist on Monday. I think I had better send it to you. You will, I think, find it emphatic enough. If you like it you can say so when you send it on to Tagore. In the first little chapter I have given what Indians have said to me about Tagore—their praise of him and their description of his life. What I am anxious about—some fact may be given wrongly, and yet, I don't want anything crossed out by Tagore's modesty.

I think it might be well if some body compiled a sort of "Who's Who" paragraph on Tagore, and put after the Introduction a string of dates, saying when he was born, when his chief works were published. My essay is an impression. I give no facts except those in the quoted conversation.

Yours,
 W. B. Yeats

ceeds to Urbana (Illinois), speaks from Unitarian chapels at several places on metaphysical topics, on November 1, 1912, the India Society of London publishes a limited edition (750 copies only) of *Gitanjali* (Song-Offerings) containing English translations of 103 poems principally from his three Bengali works—*Navedya*, *Kheya* and *Gitanjali*—with an introduction by Yeats and a pencil-sketch by Rothenstein as frontispiece, the book immediately takes the English literary public by storm and is acknowledged as the greatest literary event of the day, leaves Urbana in January 1913 for Chicago where he stays as the guest of Mrs. Vaughn Mody and lectures on "Ideals of Ancient Civilisation of India" at the University, speaks also on "The Problem of Evil" at the Unitarian Hall, Chicago, goes to Rochester to attend the Congress of Races and meets there the great German philosopher Rudolph Eucken, who warmly greets him, having become an ardent admirer on reading "Song-Offerings", reads his famous address on "Race Conflict" at the Congress of Races on January 30, goes to Boston and addresses a distinguished meeting of intellectuals there, returns to Urbana on March 10, via New York and Chicago, delivers a course of lectures at Harvard University, which are later published as *Sadhana*. MacMillan publishes a popular edition of *Gitanjali* followed by *Gardener and Crescent Moon*. The India Society brings out his translation of *Chitrangada* in English as "Chitra" +

IN INDIA, on May 26, at Viceregal Lodge, Simla, Rev. C. F. Andrews reads at a meeting presided over by the Viceroy Lord Hardinge, a paper on the life and poetry of Tagore,—

* Ezra Pound's "Poetry: A Magazine of Verse" published from Chicago had the honour of being the first *occidental* publication to print Tagore's poems in English. His six *Gitanjali* poems appeared in *Poetry* for December, 1912.

+ On one occasion in London, after the reading of the Poet's play *Chitra*, Mr. Montagu, the Under-Secretary of State for India, described how, when riding through an Indian forest at night, he came upon a clearing where two or three men sat round a fire. Not being certain of his road, he was glad to dismount and rest his tired horse. Shortly after he had joined the group, a poor-looking ill-clothed lad came out of the forest and sat down also at the fire. First one of the men sang a song and then another. The boy's turn came, and he sang a song more beautiful in words and music than the rest. When asked who had made the song he said that he did not know, "they were singing these songs everywhere." A while after, Mr. Montagu heard the words and music again, this time in a very different place, and when he asked for the name of the maker of the song, he heard for the first time the name of Rabindranath Tagore.—Ernest Rhys in his biography of *Rabindranath Tagore* (London 1916), p. 4

A CHRONICLE OF FIFTY YEARS

His Excellency in his presidential remarks describing Rabindranath as 'The Poet Laureate of Asia, returns from America to England in June, 1913, repeats his American lectures at the Caxton Hall, London, on Indian religion and philosophy, deploring, *inter alia* the "retro-pective and archaeological interest" taken by Western scholars in the great religious scriptures of India* goes to the Duchess Nursing Home for a surgical operation for a malady which Homeopathy had failed to cure, boards the "City of Lahore" on September 4, to return home shortly before departure learns for the first time about the devastating floods in Bengal (Burdwan) and speaks strongly in protest against the English news agencies failing to send out or English newspapers to record such news of vital importance to India arrives in Bombay on October 4, 1913 and reaches Calcutta on October 6

Nobel Prize and World Fame

ON NOVEMBER 13, 1913 comes to India the news that the Nobel Prize for Literature has been awarded to the Poet for his *Gitanjali* which was acclaimed by the Swedish Academy† as the greatest piece of idealistic work in Literature for the year, great rejoicings take place all over the country, a large number of people of all classes go from Calcutta to Santiniketan in a special train, on November 23, to congratulate the Poet, who, however, replies with some asperity accusing most of them who had come having wanted to recognise him till the West had acknowledged his poetry in this striking manner, is severely criticised for this "inhospitable reply" but is supported by Bipin Chandra Pal, who, in an article in his *Hindu Review*, said "No man of Rabindranath's position and sensibilities could have been

less bitter under similar circumstances" and "the rebuke of his reply was neither undeserved nor undignified"† R. M. Macdonald—then in India as a member of the Public Services Commission—visits Santiniketan and afterwards writes an article on it (*The Daily Chronicle*, January 14, 1914), the honorary degree of "D Litt" is conferred on him by the University of Calcutta on December 26, 1913, at a special convocation held at Government House, Calcutta, in which similar honours were also conferred upon Prof. Paul Vinogradoff, Hermann Jacob, Salomon Levi and other savants of Europe who had come to India at the invitation of the University,† at a

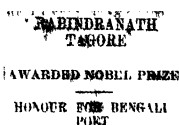
*Mr. Lal further wrote

'He plainly told the deputation of the evident unreality of the demonstration they had got up in his honour. He knew that only a small percentage of those who formed that motley assembly had cared to read his works or had studied to understand his message. He must have seen before him others who had hitherto refused to give him their literary allegiance. And he asked them bluntly: What brings you gentlemen here to-day? You whom I had failed to please so long, what have I done, pray, now to please you so mightily? It is not my worth but the recognition of the foreigners that has evidently worked up this sudden outburst of appreciation. I thank you for your generosity but excuse me please if I refuse to get drunk with you over this gilded cup of foreign wine. And Rabindranath would not have been what he is if he had failed to administer this salutary rebuke to those who evidently looked up still to European appraisers for the determination of the intellectual or moral values of their national efforts and achievements.'

In this connection the Poet wrote from Santiniketan to William Rothenstein under date November 18, 1913

The very first moment I received the message of the great honour conferred on me by the award of the Nobel prize, my heart turned towards you with love and gratitude. I felt certain that of all my friends none would be more glad at this news than you. Honours' crown of honour is to know that it will rejoice the hearts of those whom we hold the most dear. But, all the same, it is a very great trial for me. The perfect whirlwind of public excitement it has given rise to is frightful. It is almost as bad as tying a tin can at a dog's tail making it impossible for him to move without creating noise and collecting crowds all along. I am being smothered with telegrams and letters for the last few days and the people who never had any friendly feelings towards me nor ever read a line of my works are loudest in their protestations of joy. I cannot tell you how tired I am of all this shouting, the stupendous amount of its unreality being something appalling. Really these people honour the honour in me and not myself."

special reception at Government House His Excellency Lord Carmichael



Language Nov 13
The prize for literature has
been awarded to the Indian poet
Rabindranath Tagore. It is
the first time that the Nobel prize has
been given to an Indian.
Previous awards of the prize are as
follows:
1901 Prof. Sully Prudhomme
1902 Prof. Maurice Maeterlinck
1903 Henryk Sienkiewicz
1904 Rudyard Kipling
1905 Paul Iverne (Swiss)
1906 Giosue Carducci (Italian)
1907 Edmond Rostand (French)
1908 Theodor Mommsen (German)
1909 Romain Rolland (French)
1910 Paul Iverne (Swiss)
1911 Paul Iverne (Swiss)
1912 Paul Iverne (Swiss)
1913 Rabindranath Tagore (Indian)



—Facsimile of the announcement in a Calcutta newspaper of the award of the Nobel Prize to Rabindranath (From 'The Statesman' Nov 15, 1913)

In presenting the Poet to the Chancellor, Lord Harding, the Viceroy the Viceroy-Chancellor Sir Austen Chamberlain said—

"In Rabindranath Tagore, we have our national poet, who, to our pride and satisfaction, is at the present moment not only the most prominent figure in the field of Bengali literature, but also occupies a place in the foremost rank amongst the living poets of the world. This is not an occasion on which I could undertake a critical estimate of his voluminous work as a lyrical poet, dramatist and a prose writer, but one

† Ernest Rhys in his *Biography of Rabindranath Tagore* says that "a distinguished Swedish Orientalist had read the poems in Bengali before they appeared in English"

† Though the honorary degree was conferred upon the Poet after the award of the Nobel Prize, the proposal had actually been made and accepted by the Senate sometime before the announcement of the Prize

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

formally hands over the Nobel Prize Diploma and Medal to the Poet.

THE house at Sarul having now been fitted up with laboratory equipment for scientific research, a formal "house-warming" takes place on the first day of the Bengali Rira 1321 (April, 1914); Charles Andrews and William Pearson return from South Africa to Santiniketan where they had gone together "to fight", in the words of the Poet, "our cause with Mr. Gandhi and others"; Nandalal Bose, the famous artist, pays a visit to Santiniketan and is accorded a reception by the Poet; the drama, *Achalayatan*, is staged at Santiniketan, the Poet himself appearing in the leading role with Pearson, who spoke Bengali beautifully; writes a foreword to a Bengali book, *Basanlal Prayan*, written by Mrs. Sarajubala Das Gupta (daughter of Dr. Brajendranath Seal) in memory of her husband, Basanta Das (a brother of C. R. Das).

"Sabuj-patra" and Santiniketan

PRAMATHA CHAUDHURI ("Birbal"), lawyer and man of letters, starts (May 8, 1914) the *Sabuj-patra* (Green leaves) a Bengali periodical; the Poet contributes every month poems, essays, stories to this new journal, which emphasises the characteristic Indian values, satirizes conventionality, hollow snobbery and lazy romanticism; goes to spend the summer at Ramgarh Hills in the district of Almorah; composes poems in obvious distress of mind filled with dark forebodings of an uncertain approach of pillage and destruction; on return to Santiniketan, receives a foreign visitor, an Arab poet, named Bustane, who had translated Tagore's

may, without fear of contradiction, venture upon the statement that the finest products of his imagination are characterised by an element of beauty, patriotism and spiritualism, which is of the perennial value and independent of local and racial accidents and which will appeal cultured minds qualified to appreciate the highest flights of poetic thought and manifestations of spiritual beauty. Apart, however, from the pre-eminence of Mr. Rabindranath Tagore as a poet, we must not overlook the true significance of the world-wide recognition now accorded for the first time to the writings of an author who has embodied the best products of his genius in an Indian vernacular. This recognition, indeed, has been preceded by a remarkable revolution in what used to be not long ago the current estimate, in academic circles, of the true position of the vernaculars as a subject of study by the students of our University."

In conferring the degree, the Chancellor, Lord Hardinge said:—

"Upon the modest brow of the last of these the Nobel Prize has but lately set the laurels of a world-wide recognition, and I can only hope that the retiring disposition of our Bengali Poet will forgive us for thus dragging him into publicity once more and recognise with due recognition that he must endure the penalties of greatness."



—The Nobel Prize Deputation to Santiniketan on November 23, 1913
Left to right: Rev. Gordon Milburn, THE POET, the late Sir Asutosh Chaudhuri.

THE POET'S REPLY TO THE NOBEL PRIZE DEPUTATION

The text of the speech is given below:—

আজ আমাকে সমস্ত দেশের নামে আপনাতা
যে সম্মান দিয়ে এখানে উপস্থিত হয়েছেন তা
অসম্ভব সে সম্পূর্ণ ভাবে গ্রহণ করি এমন লম্বা
আমের নেই।.....

দাঁড়া জনসাধারণের দেশ। গীতা কবীর
সঙ্গীতধারের সম্মান গীতেরই প্রাণ এবং জন-
পিতৃভালার কাঁচ সেই সম্মানে কীভাবে প্রো-
জনগ আছে। গীতা লম্বাকে উদ্ধার করবার
কাজে পিতার স্বপ্নন সন্তুষ্কর রূপে আমার পক্ষের
মত জনস্বয় মন করেন, জনসাধারণ উদ্ধৃত
হয়ে উঠে গীতার লম্বাকে সম্মান দাবি অভিব্যক্তি
করবে, এটাই সত্য, এটাইই বাস্তবিক।

কিন্তু কবির সে ভাণ্ডা নয়। মাতৃদেব কল্ল
কেন্দ্র কবির বাজ এবং সেই কল্লের স্রীতি/স্রী
কি ব কবিত্বের সার্বজন্য। কিন্তু এই কল্লের
নিম্নে বিচিত্র—সেখানে কোথাও মে, কোথাও
তোঁ। জ্ঞানএস স্রীতির কলমেই যখন কবির
লম্বা যখন প্রকাশ্য কীর হল চমক না যে নির্ভি-
শেষ সর্ব স্বাভাবিক স্রীতি তিনি লাভ করছেন।
দাঁড়া স্বাক্ষর প্রামাণ্য আলোচন উত্তর সমস্ত
পাঠ্যক্রেত উদ্ধরণ প্রদান করতে পারেন; আর
মাল পূর্ণ স্বাক্ষর উদ্ভূত, গীতার অধিকার
সেবাসনা শাণার প্রাচ্য ও পশ্চিম স্বাক্ষর থেকে
উঠে চাইতে করে চল চলে কতা।

কবি বিশেষের কাব্য কেউ বা আমান পান,
কেউ বা উল্লস পানেন, ব্যক্তি বা ভাষে আপাত
লাগে এবং উত্তর ভাষাভাষে। আমার কাব্য
সম্বন্ধে এই দৃষ্টান্তের বিরুদ্ধে কেনও ব্যতিক্রম
হয়নি একথা আমার এবং আপনাদের জন্য
আমি। দেশের লোকের হাত থেকে যে অমূল্য
ও অপমান ভাষার ভাষা পৌছিয়ে তার পরিচয়
নিভাত প্রদান হয়নি এবং এতে কল আমি তা
নিঃশেষে ধন করে এসেছি। এমন সময় কি ভক্ত
যে বিশেষ হতে আমি সম্মান লাভ করবুম তা
এখনো পূর্ণতা আমি নিজেই ভাল করে উল্লস
করতে পারিনি। আমি সম্বন্ধে পূর্ণতার বসে
বসে পূজাও অভিনয় দ্বিধাক্রম তিনিই সম্বন্ধের
পশ্চিম তীরে সেই অর্থ গ্রহণ করবার জন্য যে গীতা
দক্ষ হইবে প্রশস্তি কবেতিলেন সে-কণা আমি
আনতুল না। তাঁর এই প্রকার আমি লাভ
করেছি—এই আমার সত্য গাত।

হাই হোক, যে কারোই হোক, আজ বুঝলে
আমাকে সম্বন্ধের বয়সনা লাভ করেছেন। তাঁর
যদি কোন দ্বন্দ্ব থাকে তবে সে কেবল সেখানকার
উদ্ভিক্রমের রূপে থেবেই আছে। ভাষার
দেশের সমস্ত তাঁর কোনো আভিক্রম সম্বন্ধ নেই।
বোলেব গীতের স্বাক্ষর কোনো রচনাও জন বা
রস সৃষ্টি করতে পারে না।

অন্তএব আজ যখন সমস্ত দেশের জনসাধারণের
প্রতিনিধিগণে আপনাতা আমাকে সম্মান-উপহার
দিয়ে প্রত্যহ হচ্চেন তখন সে সম্মান কেন্দ্র করে
আমি নির্ভরকর যে গ্রহণ করব? এ সম্মান আমি
কতদিনই বা রাখা করব? আমার আমার
এমন উচ্চদিন থাকবে না আমার উচ্চতার
কো আগে তখন পায়তলা সমস্ত সৈন্ত আমার
ত থাকে থাকে প্রকাশ হতে থাকবে।

তাই আমি আপনাদের কাছে কতকগুলো
ভাবাভি.— যা সত্য তা আমি হলেও আমি বাণ
করে নেব, কিন্তু যা সাময়িক উদ্ভেদনার মতো, তা
আমি নোকার করে নিতে অক্ষম। কোনো কোনো
দেশে যত্ন ও অতিথিরে হুতা দিয়ে প্রার্থনা করা
হয়। আর আপনাতা আমার করে সম্মানের যে
হুতপাত্র আমার সম্বন্ধে ধরেছেন তা আমি ওঁদের
কছে পূর্ণতা প্রকাশ্য, কিন্তু এ মনিকা আমি অগ্ররে
গ্রহণ করতে পারব না। এর বহুতা কে
আমার চিত্তকে আমি ঘুরে ঘাড়ে চাই। অমহা
রচনার স্বাক্ষর আপনাদের বসে করে কে
আমি স্রীতিলাভ বরিয়ে উত্তর আমাকে অস্বস্ত
কিন পূর্ণতা দ্বন্দ্ব যখন প্রত্যহ করে ছব, কিন্তু
সাধারণের কাছ থেকে সন্তান সম্মানভীর কোন
যোগ্যতা আমি নুতন রূপে প্রকাশ করেছি একবা
বলা অসম্ভব হয়।

যিনি প্রথম হলে অমরনের প্রত্যেক কীটটি
হল হয়ে কোটে, প্রত্যেক পত্রপত্রগে চন্দ্রপাত
পশ্চিম হয়ে এবং সমস্ত বাণিকা কোটিস্থান হয়ে
ওঠে, গীতা করে আর আমি এই প্রার্থনা
ভাবাভি.—তিনি এই আভিক্রম সম্বন্ধের অমল
অভিলাষ থেকে তাঁর স্বপ্নগান বহির্ভবনের স্বাক্ষর
আমাকে নিভূত রক্ষা করল।

—Sanjivani (Calcutta) : Nov. 28, 1913



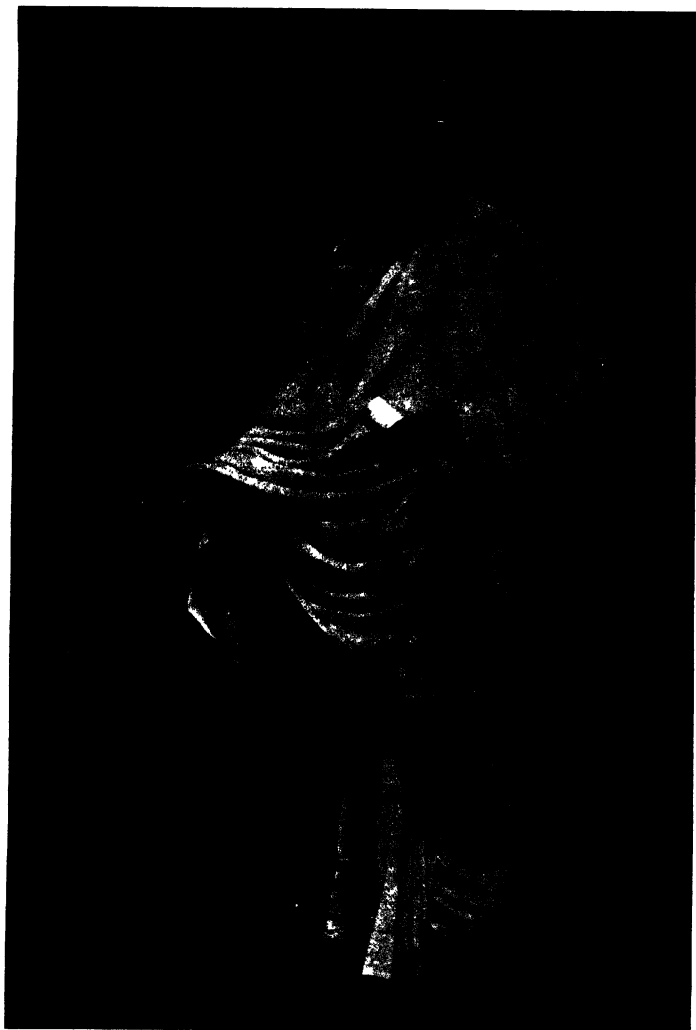
On the occasion of a Dinner given by the now defunct Orient Club, Calcutta, to Rabindranath Tagore in December, 1913, after the award of the Nobel Prize of the Poet

First Row (sitting on the floor from left to right) —The late Mr Sisir K. Mallick, Dr S K Basu the late Dr Mrngendra Lal Mitter, the late Mr Noyan Chatterjee the late Mr. P K Ray Chaudhuri (reclining), Kumar S D Ghosal of Bhukulash, the late Mr William Graham

Second Row (sitting on chairs from left to right) —Sir Abdur Rahim, the late Mr B Chakrabarti, RABINDRANATH TAGORE, the late Maharaja Jagadindra Nath Roy of Natore the late Mr Ramsay Macdonald (who was then in Calcutta as a member of the Royal Commission on Public Services in India)

Third Row (standing from left to right) —the late Mr. A. K. Ghosh, Mr Ajay Dutt Mr A C Sen, Mr P K Sen, Mr Asoke Dutt, Mr St John Stephen, the late Mr J M Sen Gupta the late Mr Basudha Nig Mr Sinanda Sen Mr Ans Yasufi, Manaraja Sankanta Acharya of Mymensingh (last figure)

Fourth Row (standing from left to right) —Mr G C Barnes (Second figure), Mr N Gupta (third figure)



1914

From a Photo taken
in Calcutta

Courtesy : Mrs. Ajit Chakravarti

Printed by
Jibbar Phototype Studio

By
Bourne & Shepherd

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

poems into Arabic from the English texts of "Song-Offerings", "Crescent Moon", etc., his poems are now being translated into all the principal European languages—his fame spreading all over the world, contributes to *Sabuj-patra*, *Strir-patra* (Letter from a Wife), a short story in which rings the conflict then gradually awakening Indian womanhood to the tragedy of their position, it creates a furore and Bipin Chandra Pal caricatures the story by writing in the *Narayan* (a paper started by C R Das) *Mrinaler-patra* (Letter from Mrinal), the *Narayan* criticises Tagore for lacking in realism and indulging in exotic writings which had no root in the soil, the Poet replies in the *Sabuj-patra* with two essays, *Basiab* and *Lokahita* deploring, in the latter essay, the tendency on the part of those engaged in social service to patronise the common people while dealing with the problem of poverty and social uplift

The War Begins

ON the declaration of the War in Europe, the Poet delivers a remarkable sermon at Santiniketan (August 5, 1914) following it up with an essay, *Ma ma himsi* (Thou Shalt not Hate), comes to Calcutta and reads an address of felicitations on the occasion of Ramendra Sundar Trivedi's fiftieth birthday celebration, returning to Santiniketan, goes to stay in Surul where he composes, in 46 days, 108 songs (*Gitab*) and teaches them all to his grand-nephew, Dinendranath Tagore, who was the "custodian and storehouse" of his musical compositions also writes some of the poems published in the *Sabuj-patra* and later collected in *Balaka* and two short stories, *Bhas Phoula* and *Shesher Rain*, the last being later translated by himself and published in English as "Mashi", goes on a visit, during the Puja holidays, to Bodh Gaya and Allahabad, goes up for a few days to Darjeeling, returns to Santiniketan but leaves again for Agra and goes to Allahabad, composes at Allahabad his famous poem "Shah Jahan" (*Balaka*)

First Meeting with Gandhi

THE students and staff of the Phoenix School (started by Gandhi in the Transvaal) come to Santiniketan (in response to the Poet's invitation, previously sent, at the instance of Andrews), influenced by these new arrivals, the students of Santiniketan resolve to help the suffering jute cultivators in East Bengal by giving up using sugar and flour with meals and thus saving money for the purpose, the Poet, however, disapproves of this and writes: "the best form of self-sacrifice which they could undertake was doing some hard work to earn money", delivers in Calcutta February 13, 1915) a remarkable address at

the inauguration of *Bangya Hilsadhan Mandali* (Bengal Social Service League founded by Dr. D. N. Maitra), returns to Santiniketan on the 22nd February, narrowly missing Gandhi and Mrs. Gandhi, who had come, early in February, straight from Bombay after his visit to England, to see the Phoenix School lads but was hastily called away to Poona on Gopal Krishna Gokhale's death, staying at Surul, writes *Phalguni* and reads the play at Santiniketan on March 4, 1915, (later it is published in the *Sabuj-patra*); welcomes Gandhi to Santiniketan on March 6, on the 10th March, at Gandhi's suggestion, an "experiment" is started in training the boys to be self-supporting without the help of cooks, servants and sweepers * the play *Phalguni* is staged at Santiniketan with the Poet in the role of the blind 'Baul'

"Phalguni"

RECEIVED Lord Carmichael (Governor of Bengal) at Santiniketan on March 20 1915 the Phoenix School students and staff leave for Hardwar with Gandhi, who comes to take them away on March 31, staying again at Surul composes many new songs and poems a cycle of four stories published in the *Sabuj-patra* appears in book form under the title of *Chhatra-sasan* new composes writing a novel—*Ghare-baire*—which is serially published in the *Sabuj-patra* is the recipient of a Knighthood on the King Emperor's Birthday (3rd June, 1915) Andrews and Pearson go to Tin Islands to enquire into the grievances of Indian indentured labour, the Poet proceeds to Kashmir with Rathindranath Pratima Devi and the poet Satyendranath Dutt, composes several of his most well-known poems while at Srinagar, contributes to the Shakespeare Tercentenary Commemoration Volume a remarkable Bengali sonnet at the request of Shakespeare Society, returning to Calcutta, reads a paper at a public meeting at the Rimmohun Library on *Sikhar-bahan* ("Vehicle of Instruction"), urging the adoption of the Bengali as the medium of instruction at the local university, the *Phalguni* is produced at the Jorasanko house in aid of the famine-stricken people at Baulura, the Poet appearing in the dual roles of young 'Kabisekhar' and the blind, old 'Baul' (Jan. 1916), returns to Santiniketan and finishes *Ghare-baire*, *Balaka* published, writes in the *Sabuj-patra* an article entitled *Chhatra-sasan* protesting vehemently against the repression of students after the Oaten episode at the Presidency College,

* The practice was abandoned owing to practical difficulties. The 10th day of March is annually observed, however, at Santiniketan as the 'Gandhi Day', when the staff and students do all the work and the entire senial staff enjoy the day "off"—Ed

drawing pointed attention to the growing estrangement between Englishmen and Bengalees, his collected poetical works in Bengali are published in ten volumes, by the Indian Press, Allahabad, MacMillan & Co publish "Fruit Gathering" and "Hungry Stones & Other Stories."

PROCEEDS to Japan, on May 3, 1916 with Andrews, Pearson and Mukul Dey, reaches Rangoon on the 6th and is given a rousing reception; leaving on the 10th, arrives at Singapore on the 15th, reaching Hongkong on the 22nd May is informed by the Captain that under orders from authorities, the ship has to cut out Shanghai and proceed straight to Japan as the public had grown impatient at the prospect of seeing him, arrives at Kobe on May 29, is entertained first by the Japanese Press Association and then at a great gathering of Japanese intellectuals, when Count Okuma welcomes him with a speech in Japanese and the Poet replies in Bengali, stays for some time at Hakone as the guest of Hara, the celebrated painter, to whom he dedicates "Stray Birds", later published by Macmillan, criticises the Japanese Imperialist policy against the young Republic of China and speaks, on June 17, at the Tokyo University on "The Message of India to Japan", and on "The Spirit of Japan" in July at the Keio Gijuku University, falls immediately into official disavour, receives and rejects an invitation from Vancouver (Canada) as a gesture against that British Dominion's discriminating treatment of Indians

Indictment of Nationalism

LEAVES for America and reaches Seattle (Washington) on September 18, 1916, is met by J B Pond of Pond Lyceum a well known American lecture bureau, and enters into a contract with him for a lecture tour in the United States, the first public reception in America is given by the ladies of the Seattle Sunset Club, at the hall of this Club the Poet also delivers his first public address (arranged by Pond) on September 25, speaking on "The Cult of Nationalism", condemning the greedy Imperialism of Western nations and also vigorously denouncing British rule in India,* lectures next at Port-

* The Poet said inter alia

"This Europe in war of Nations is the war of tribulation. Man, the person, must protest for his very life against the heaping p of things where there should be the east, and systems and policies where there should glow living human relationship he time has come when, for the sake of the whole outraged world, Europe should ally know in her own person the terrible barbarity of the thing called the Nation. "The Nation has thriven long upon untended humanity. Men, the farrest creation of God, came out of the National manufacture in huge numbers as war making and

RABINDRANATH TAGORE



—At Hakone as the guest of the famous Japanese artist Haia June 1916

land (Oregon) on the 27th, at San Francisco (California) on the 30th, where he pleads for "more of the fundamental idea of brotherhood and less of organisation", a section of the American Press strongly criticises his speech on Nationalism, is feted by the Japanese of Frisco on October 3, and by the Los Angeles public on October 4, attends a concert by

money making puppets ludicrously vain of their pitiful perfection of mechanism. Human society grew more and more into a marionette show of politicians, soldiers, manufacturers and bureaucrats, pulled by wire arrangements of wonderful efficiency.

"But the apothecosis of selfishness can never make its interminable breed of hatred and greed, fear and hypocritical suspicion and tyranny, an end in themselves. These monsters grow into huge shapes but never into harmonies. And this Nation may grow on to an unmanageable corpulence, not of a living body, but of steel and steam and office buildings, till its deformity can contain no longer its ugly voluminousness,—till it begins to crack and gape, breathe gas and fire in gasps, and its death rattles sound in cannon roars. In this war the death throes of the Nation have commenced. Suddenly, all its mechanism going mad, it has begun the dance of the lures, shattering its own limbs, scattering them into the dust. It is the fifth act of the tragedy of the unreal."

"And we of no nations of the world, whose heads have been bowed to the dust, will know that this dust is more sacred than the bricks which build the pride of power. For this dust is fertile of life, and of beauty and worship. We shall thank God that we were made to wait in silence through the night of despair, had to bear the insult of the proud and the strong man's burden, yet all through it, though our hearts quaked with doubts and fear, never could we blind believe in the salvation which machinery offered to man, but we held fast to our trust in God and the truth of the human soul. And we can still cherish the hope that, when power becomes ashamed to occupy its throne and is ready to make way for love, when the morning comes for cleansing the blood-stained steps of the Nation along the high road of humanity, we shall be called upon to bring our own vessel of sacred water—the water of worship—to sweeten the history of man into purity, and with sprinkling make the trampled dust of the centuries blessed with fruitfulness."

—Nationalism, pp 43-46 (1917)

Paderewski and has a long talk with him reads at the Columbia Theatre, New York, one of his short stories and gives readings from the English translation of *Raja*, Ramchandra, the Sikh leader of the Indian revolutionaries banded under the "Hindusthan Gadr" party, attacks the Poet in a newspaper article on the alleged ground of 'sailing under false colours by retaining the privilege of a British Knighthood and airing anti-British views', a rumour spreads of a plot against his life by the Hindusthan Gadr Party, but the Poet refuses to place himself under police protection as he does not believe in the rumour, Ramchandra later denies, in the *Poikland Telegram* any intention to kill him, though advised by some friends to cut short his lecture tour, the Poet refuses to change his plans and goes to Santa Barbara where he repeats his lecture on Nationalism, then tours lecturing through Pasadena, Salt Lake City, Chicago, Iowa, Milwaukee, Louisville and Detroit where his lecture on "Nationalism" was characterised in the Press as "sickly saccharine mental poison" (*Detroit Journal*, Nov. 14), at the very exclusive Twentieth Century Club at Cleveland he speaks against America's lust for gold, comes to New York where in an interview with the Press (Nov. 18) he denounces Western Nationalism and speaks strongly against America's anti-Asiatic policy, lectures at the Carnegie Hall in New York (Nov. 21), in Philadelphia, and again in New York at the School of Political Education on "The World of Personality", speaks next at Boston at Mount Holyoak College on "Art", at Taramount Temple, on "Nationalism" where he receives "one of the warmest welcomes ever accorded to a lecturer in Boston" (*Boston Herald*, Dec. 6, 1916); is welcomed by President Hadley at Yale University as a "seeker after light and truth", returns to New York for a farewell speech, on December 12, at the Amsterdam Theatre, which is packed to capacity; goes to Cleveland again to plant a tree

in Shakespeare Garden, then to Colorado to see the famous springs and returns again to San Francisco where he writes the foreword to Paul Richard's book, "To The Nations" (published by J. B. Pond), leaves for Japan, on January 21, 1917 and halts en route at Honolulu for a day, Pearson stays in Japan and the Poet returns to Calcutta, with Mukul Dev, on March 17, 1917.

The "Vichitra" Club

RETURNING to Calcutta, the Poet has a pleasant surprise in the shape of the *Vichitra* School of Arts and Crafts sponsored and organized in his absence by Gaganendranath Abanindranath and Rathindranath at his Jorasanko-house, finds also another institution, the "Vichitra Club", which soon becomes the meeting place for Bengal's intellectuals and literary people, in the *Sabuj-patra* writes *Bhasa Katha* strongly supporting Pramatha Chaudhuri in his attempt to popularize the literary tongue and to write the Bengali language in the same way as it is spoken, comes to Calcutta for a gala celebration of his birthday by the Vichitra Club, writes short stories (*Japasuni* and *Paola Numbri*) for the *Sabuj-patra*, protests strongly against the internment of Mrs. Besant for her political activities, in Calcutta, reads, first at Rammohun Library (Aug. 4, 1917) and then at the Alfred Theatre, his famous political paper *Kavir Ichhayaa Karma* ("As the Master Wills It"), Bhupendranath Basu presiding at the latter place, composes, at the request of Pandit Malaviya, his famous national song *Desha, Desha nandita kari mandrita taba veri*, which is sung for the first time at the meeting at Rammohun Library, reads a paper on *Sanglier Mukti* (Redemption of Song), in a letter to a friend in England (which is published by the Indian Press on September 7) he strongly expresses himself on the ruthless repression then practised by the Government of Bengal against political workers by imprisonment and detention without charge or trial, "in a few cases driving them to insanity or suicide", Lord Ronaldshay, Governor of Bengal, denies the Poet's charges in a speech at the Bengal Legislative Council; to this the Poet replies later in a statement (Jan. 11, 1918), in which he gives a concrete instance of a young student at Santiniketan, who had run away from the school chagrined at his failure at the annual test, being arrested and detained, without charge or trial, under the all-embracing Indian "DORA".

Politics Again

A CONTROVERSY having arisen among Bengal Congressmen as to making Mrs. Besant, then under in-

A CHRONICLE OF EIGHTY YEARS

ternment, the President of the Indian National Congress session in Calcutta in December, 1917, the Poet warmly supports the cause of Mrs Besant against the opposition of Surendranath Banerjea and his followers, receives, on September 8, a deputation consisting of Motilal Ghose, C R Das, Bipinchandra Pal, B Chakravarti, Hirendranath Datta, Fazlul Haq, who offer him the Chairmanship of

the Reception Committee of the forthcoming Congress session, is elected on September 11 as Chairman of the Reception Committee in place of Rai Baikunthanath Sen Bahadur, who had been previously elected*, resigns his Chairmanship in favour of Rai Baikunthanath Sen Bahadur when the controversy ends with the acceptance of Mrs Besant as President by the 'Moderate' Party, attends the Congress meet-

ing on the opening day when he receives a great ovation and reads 'India's Prayer' (a poem) immediately after the singing of *Bande Mataram*†, *Dak-Ghar* (Post Office) is staged by the Poet at the Vichitra Club hall, he himself appearing in the role of 'Thakurda', supported by Gaganendranath, Abanindranath, Rathindranath—the performance being witnessed by Gandhiji, Lilak Maharaj, Malaviyaji, Mrs. Be-

Calcutta

Sept. 10. 1917

Dear Math Dada

with reference

to our conversation when you and other friends kindly came and saw me on the morning of the 8th instant it should be clearly understood that I am willing to be the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Calcutta Congress only in the

event of the seat being vacant and subject to the sanction of the All India Congress Committee being given to the holding of the Congress in Calcutta and to Mrs Besant being its president. I have do not see any reason in any way as a rival candidate standing against the present Chairman, or as having any part to act in the final decision arrived at

by the All India Congress Committee.

Yours Sincerely
Rabindranath Tagore

The letter reproduced above was written by the Poet to Motilal Ghosh (Editor of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*) accepting the Chairmanship of the Reception Committee of the Indian National Congress session in Calcutta in 1917 when there was a great controversy over the election of Annie Besant as President. It is here published for the first time.

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“INDIA'S PRAYER”

I

Thou hast given us to 'live
Let us uphold this honour with all our strength and will
For Thy glory rests upon the glory that we are
Therefore in Thy name we oppose the power that would plant its banner upon our soul
Let us know that Thy light grows dim in the heart that bears its insult of bondage,
That the life, when it becomes feeble, timidly yields Thy throne to untruth
For weakness is the traitor who betrays our soul
Let this be our prayer to Thee—
Give us power to resist pleasure when it enslaves us,
To lift our sorrow up to Thee as the summer holds its mid-day sun,
Make us strong that our worship may flower in love, and bear fruit in work
Make us strong that we may not insult the real and the fallen,
That we may hold our love high where all things around us are wooing the dust
They fight and kill for self-love, giving it Thy name,
They fight for hunger that thrives on brothers' flesh,
They fight against Thine anger and die
But let us stand firm and suffer with strength
for the True, for the Good, for the Eternal in man,
for Thy Kingdom which is in the union of hearts,
for the Freedom which is of the Soul

II

Our voyage is begun, Captain, we bow to Thee!
The storm howls and the waves are wicked and wild, but we sail on
The menace of danger waits in the way to yield to Thee its offerings of pain,
and a voice in the heart of the tempest cries "Come to conquer fear!"
Let us not linger to look back for the laggards, or bemoan the quickening hours with
dread and doubt
For Thy time is our time and Thy burden is our own
and life and death are but Thy breath playing upon the eternal sea of Life.
Let us not wear our hearts away picking small help and taking slow count of friends,
Let us know more than all else that Thou art with us and we are Thine for ever

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sent and other prominent Congress leaders; the communal riots in Behar (Sahabad) provokes from his pen the famous political paper on *Chhota-o-horo* ("The Great and the Small") meets in Calcutta at his Jorasanko residence, R. S. Montagu, the Secretary of State, who had come out on his "Reform" mission,* returns to Santiniketan and receives Sir Michael Sadler and other members of the Calcutta University Commission; writes a devastating satire on the educational policy of the Government of India (*Tolakahini*: 'The Parrot's Training'); coming to Calcutta, delivers a lecture on *Chhanda* (rhythm); composes the poems of *Palataka*; his fifty-seventh birthday is celebrated at the Vichitra Club.

with the Maharaja and returns to Calcutta; Ajit Chakraverti dies in Calcutta (Dec., 1918); on the 22nd December, 1918 at Santiniketan the Poet explains his idea about creating an institution which would be a true centre for the different cultures of the East and lays its foundation stone at the site of the present tennis court at Santiniketan; Macmillan & Co. publish "Lover's Gift and Crossing", "Mashi and Other Stories".

which he offers to preside; on May 30, 1919 he writes the "historic letter" to the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, renouncing his Knighthood in order to "give voice to the protest of millions of my countrymen surprised into a dumb anguish of terror";* all this time the Poet is engaged in writing the sketches of *Lipika* (published in 1922); a new Bengali monthly, the *Sant-niketan-Patrika*, the organ of the Santiniketan Asram is started under his editorship.

1919-1924

AGE 58-63

ON MAY 9, 1918, Gourlay, then Private Secretary to the Governor of Bengal (Lord Ronaldshay), informs Andrews that the Government had received information from San Francisco, that the Poet had been connected with the young Indian revolutionaries undergoing trial there, and that, it was rumoured, he had received German money for his American tour in 1916, when he spoke so strongly against British rule in India; the Poet writes an indignant letter to President Wilson, and although assured of generous reception by the American public (through the American Consul at Calcutta) gives up the idea of a foreign tour which he had been contemplating for some time; receives the news of Pearson's arrest and deportation to England, at the instance of the British Government, for alleged anti-British activities in Japan and America; declines an offer of Rs. 50,000 by Tilak for undertaking "a cultural propaganda tour" in Europe and America; on May 16, 1918, his eldest daughter, Bela Devi (Mrs. Sarat Chandra Chakravarti) expires in Calcutta after a protracted illness; returns to Santiniketan on May 28, cancelling at the last minute a trip to Darjeeling and stays there for four months occupying himself mainly with teaching work; leaves in the autumn for a tour in Madras but stops for a few days at Pithapuram

OUT on a tour of South India, the Poet arrives at Bangalore (January 10, 1919) from where he goes to Mysore, Ooty, Coimbatore, Palghat, Salem, Trichinopoly, Seringapattam, Kumbakonam, Tanjore, Madras—speaking to large and enthusiastic audiences on "The Message of the Forest", "The Folk Religions of India" and "The Centre of Indian Culture"; coming to Madras speaks as Chancellor of the "National University", founded by Mrs. Annie Besant, whose guest he was at Adyar; returns to Calcutta and speaks publicly in this city for the first time in English, to a crowded auditorium at the Empire Theatre, on "Education"; reads next at the Bose Institute "The Message of the Forest."

The Great Gesture

ON the inauguration by Gandhiji of his Satyagraha movement as a protest against the passing of the Rowlatt Act, the Poet writes a letter in which he expresses his apprehension of the movement giving rise to forces beyond control; on April 13 takes place the shooting of unarmed citizens of Amritsar at Jallianwallah Bag; follow Martial Law in the Punjab and attendant atrocities; strict censorship prevents news of official outrages reaching other provinces; the Poet comes to know of these at the end of May; not receiving support from political leaders in his attempt to go to the Punjab, he comes to Calcutta (May 27), where he fails to have convened a public meeting of protest over

THE nucleus of the Visva-Bharati is formed, when on July 3, 1919, *Vidya-Bharati* is opened for advanced studies in ancient Indian literatures and later in Tibetan and Chinese with Pandit Vidhusekhar Sastri at its head; publishes "The Centre of Indian Culture" lectures; composes songs and takes classes at Santiniketan; adapts *Sarodatsav* as *Reensodh*, which is staged at Santiniketan; spends the autumn (Oct.-Nov.) at Shillong; returning to Santiniketan, opens a class for dancing under two instructors brought from Manipur; visits Sylhet (December 6, 1919); Lord Ronaldshay visits Santiniketan (Feb. 1920); adapts *Raja* as *Arupratan*; goes to Gujrat, at Gandhiji's invitation, to attend an anniversary function of the Gujrat Literary Society; spends a day at Gandhiji's *Sabarnati Asram*; visits Bhavnagar and Limbdi; receives a gift of Rs. 10,000 from the ruler of Limbdi for Santiniketan; goes to Ahmedabad, Bombay, Surat and returns to Calcutta in May, 1920.

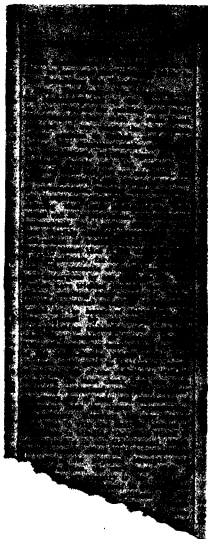
LEAVES Calcutta for Europe on May 11, 1920 with his son and daughter-in-law; sails from Bombay on May 15; on board the boat has often long talks with the Aga Khan (who, quite frequently, reads out to him from Hafiz and discusses Sufism), the

* It is interesting to note that among the Calcutta papers the 'Statesman' published the Poet's letter to the Viceroy without comment, while the 'Englishman' wrote as follows:—

"No one will be more painfully surprised than he himself to find that it will not make a hair's breadth of difference. As if it mattered a brass farthing whether Sir Rabindranath Tagore who has probably never been heard of in the wilds of the Punjab, and who, as a writer is certainly not so popular as Colonel Frank Johnson (the administrator of Martial Law in the Punjab), approved of the Government's policy or not. As if it mattered to the reputation, the honour and the security of British rule and justice whether this Bengalee poet remained a Knight or a plain Babu!"

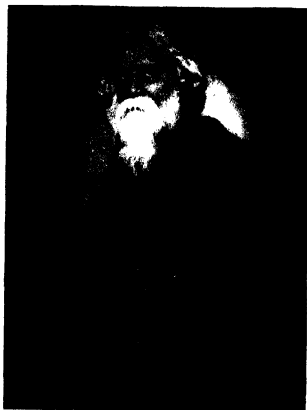
* Of this visit Mr. Montagu writes in his diary ("An Indian Diary"), under date December 21, 1917:

"After lunch I went with Gourlay to see the three brothers Tagore and their pictures. Gogananidra has gone in for caricatures à la Max Beerbohm. They are all under Japanese influence. Some of their paintings were lovely. One of their pupils, Dose, has done exceptionally brilliant work. They have a beautiful collection of old pictures, too. Raobindra, the poet, has come out of the interior because of the horrors of the police."



—The Poet's letter to Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, renouncing his Knighthood as it was published in "The Statesman" of June 3, 1919

—From a photo taken in Germany on his sixty-first birthday during his European tour of 1920-21



Maharaja of Alwar, the Jam Sahab of Nawanagar (Ranjit Singh); translates during the voyage some of his Santiniketan sermons, which are later published as "Thought Relics"; lands at Plymouth on June 5; is received by Pearson whom he meets after three years; coming to London meets Rothen-

stein, Hudson (the celebrated author of "Green Mansions"), Fox-Strangways (the author of "The Music of Hindostan"), Cunninghame-Graham (the author of "Cartegena"), Nicholas Roerich (the Russian painter who had not yet risen to fame), Bernard Shaw, Prof. Gilbert Murray and others; goes

The Historic Letter to Lord Chelmsford

WHEN TAGORE RENOUNCED HIS KNIGHTHOOD

Your Excellency,

The enormity of the measures taken by the Government in the Punjab for quelling some local disturbances has, with a rude shock, revealed to our minds the helplessness of our position as British subjects in India. The disproportionate severity of the punishments inflicted upon the unfortunate people and the methods of carrying them out, we are convinced, are without parallel in the history of civilised governments, barring some conspicuous exceptions, recent and remote. Considering that such treatment has been meted out to a population, disarmed and resourceless, by a power which has the most terribly efficient organisation for destruction of human lives, we must strongly assert that it can claim no political expediency, far less moral justification. The accounts of the insults and sufferings undergone by our brothers in the Punjab have trickled through the gagged silence, reaching every corner of India, and the universal agony of indignation roused in the hearts of our people has been ignored by our rulers—possibly congratulating themselves for imparting what they imagine as salutary lessons. This callousness has been praised by most of the Anglo-Indian papers, which have in some cases gone to the brutal length of making fun of our sufferings, without receiving the least check from the same authority, relentlessly careful in smothering

every cry of pain and expression of judgment from the organs representing the sufferers. Knowing that our appeals have been in vain and that the passion of vengeance is blinding the noble vision of statesmanship in our Government, which could so easily afford to be magnanimous, as befitting its physical strength and normal tradition, the very least that I can do for my country is to take all consequences upon myself in giving voice to the protest of the millions of my countrymen, surprised into a dumb anguish of terror. The time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in the incongruous context of humiliation, and I for my part, wish to stand, shorn, of all special distinctions, by the side of those of my countrymen who, for their so-called insignificance, are liable to suffer degradation not fit for human beings. And these are the reasons which have compelled me to ask Your Excellency, with due deference and regret, to relieve me of my title of knighthood, which I had the honour to accept from His Majesty the King at the hands of your predecessor, for whose nobleness of heart I still entertain great admiration.

Yours faithfully,
RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Calcutta,
6, Dwarkanath Tagore Lane,
May 30, 1919.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

to Oxford (June 19) to speak to the students at a function at which Dr. Robert Bridges, the Poet-Latinate of England, was to have presided but later excused himself from attending, meets Col Lawrence (of Arabian fame), who complains to him that the British Government having failed to keep any of the promises he had made to the Arabs he would never be able to face those people again, from Oxford the Poet goes to Cambridge and meets there, among others, Prof Anderson, Lowes Dickinson and J M Keynes, attends a reception arranged in his honour by the Union of East and West Society, where Sybil Thorndyke, the celebrated English actress, recites a poem composed for the occasion by Laurence Binyon

A Messenger of Peace

CALLS at the India Office on Montagu the Secretary of State for India and Lord Sinha (Under Secretary) and discusses with them the Punjab affairs, pointing out to Montagu that it was not so much the punishment of General Dyer that India asked for but moral condemnation of the crime by the British nation the callous condonation of General Dyer by the House of Lords the debate in its ugliness of racial arrogance distress him beyond measure signs along with others a letter to Premier Lloyd George suggesting Montagu as the successor of Lord Chimsford as the Viceroy of India visits Rim mohun Roy's tomb at Bristol meets Sir Horace Plunkett and A I (George Russell), prepares for a trip to Scandinavia but cancels the visit at the last moment, goes to France (August 6 1920) 'with a feeling of relief' from 'studied coolness' on the part of many of his English friends and admirers stays in Paris as the guest of M Kilm known as the richest man in France, meets Professors Sylvain Levi and De Brun visits the battlefields in Northern France and is much disturbed by scenes of devastation, goes for a few days to Southern France which he likes prepares his lecture on "The Meeting of the East and West", returns to Paris and meets Comtesse de Noailles the celebrated French poetess who tells him that she was with Clemenceau when the news of the declaration of the War came and that both turned to read from the French translation of his *Gitanjali* ("Song-Offerings") to get over the intense feeling of depression which was overpowering them, goes to Holland, being invited there, tours lecturing through the Hague Leyden, Utrecht, is warmly received everywhere, writes to J B Pond of his intention to visit America and receives a cabled reply



With C I Indias before he left for Europe 1920

that he is unable to organize any lecture for the Poet is popular feeling in America is just then not favourable to him visit Brussels (where he is received by the King of the Belgians) and Antwerp, and returns to Paris, is extremely annoyed at the inexplicable failure of his letters from England and India reaching him in time, returns to London, resolves to go to America for they must listen to the appeal of the East, and sails with Pearson, arriving in New York on October 28, 1920

Gandhiji and Non-co-operation

IN INDIA, Gandhiji comes to Santiniketan, accompanied by Shaikat Ali, in September, 1920, on his way back from the Special Congress meeting in Calcutta, the Santiniketan School decides not to send up boys for the Matriculation examination of Calcutta University and a large number of students of Calcutta colleges who have non-co-operated, come out and start "village work" at Surul

ASKED about his opinion on Gandhiji's Non co operation by Press reporters in New York, declares that he believes in the power of the spirit and never in brute force, lectures at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on "The Meeting of East and West" (Nov 10), on "The Mystic Poets of Bengal" at the Brenner (Philadelphia) Women's College (Nov 12), watches a game of football at Princeton (Nov 13), and returning to New York attends the fifteenth anniversary of the National Art Club, lectures at New York (Nov 20) on "The Poet's Religion", is, however frustrated in his attempts to raise funds for Visva-Bharati, encountering, at every step, subtle but no less vigorous hostility engineered by powerful influences on the alleged grounds of his being anti-British and pro-German, at a meeting organized by the Poetry Society of New York he cannot check his feelings of disappointment, goes to Chicago (Feb 1) and stays there for some time as the guest of Mrs Mody with an interval for a short lecture-tour in Texas. Sails for Europe (March 19, 1921)

Speaks on "The Meeting of East and West" in London (April 8), flies to Paris after three weeks and is again the guest of M. Kahn, meets Romain Rolland on April 17, lectures at Musée Guimet at a meeting arranged by the Société des amis d'Orient, also addresses the Comité National d'études Sociales et Politiques (founded by M. Kahn) on "The Public Spirit of India" (April 25), receives as a gift for Visva-Bharati a splendid library from Sridhar Rana, a rich Indian pearl-merchant in Paris.

ON April 27 comes to Strasbourg and reads "The Message of the Forest" at the University, next at Geneva, on April 30, speaks on "Education" at the Rousseau Institute, his 61st birthday is celebrated all over Germany*, visits Lucerne and Basle, lectures at the Zurich Uni-

* A committee consisting of eminent Germans: Gerhart Hauptmann, Hermann Jacobi, Count Keyserling, Rudolf Eucken and Thomas Mann was formed to celebrate the Poet's 61st birthday when he was presented with an address and a magnificent collection of the classics of German literature.

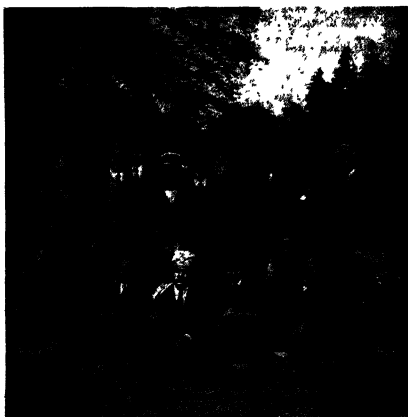
Of this greeting and gift the Poet wrote in a letter to Andrews:

"The German greeting and the gift that have come to me from Germany on the occasion of my 61st birthday are over-whelming in their significance for myself. I truly feel that I have had my second birth in the heart of the people of that country who have accepted me as their own."

"Germany has done more than any other countries in the world for opening up and broadening the channel of the intellectual and spiritual communication of the West with India, and the homage of love which she has freely given to-day to a poet of the



With Count Keyserling at Darmstadt 1921



—At the Orangery of the Josephine Gardens in Strasbourg with Prof. and Madame Sylvain Levi, Rathindranath, S. R. Bomanji, Kalidas Nag and others 1921

University (May 14) stays with Count Keyserling at Darmstadt†, lectures at Hamburg University (May 20), at Copenhagen University (May 23).

Past will surely impart to this relationship the depth of an intimate and personal character.

"Therefore I assure you that my message of gratitude which goes out to my friends in Germany carries in it India's grateful appreciation of this hospitality of heart offered to her in the person of her poet."

† Of the Poet, his friend and host at Darmstadt, Count Keyserling writes thus in his "Significant Memories":

"I have known only one man who in my view is truly worthy of reverence: he is neither Chinese nor a Belt, but the Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore. In 1912, I first became acquainted with him in Calcutta. A year later, in London, I made intimately acquainted with European music. In 1921, I twice organized meetings from him in Darmstadt. Since then I have not met him, although we have been always in touch with each other. In 1934, when he came to know in directly that my life had become very hard, he sent me a picture painted by himself, under which was the following verse: 'Faith is the bird which sings when the night is still dark.' Above all, however, Tagore's picture and ideal were and are with me always present from the moment I came to know him. This man is indeed far greater than the world

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

VISITS Sweden where he is received with great honours; speaks at the ancient University of Upsala and then at the Cathedral, the Archbishop of Upsala himself leading a big procession with torches to conduct the Poet to the meeting, speaks at a great banquet given in his honour by the Swedish Academy, Stockholm, is received by the King of Sweden, comes back to Berlin where he stays with Hugo Stinnes and delivers two lectures at the University, "scenes of frenzied heroworship" marking the meeting, is feted by Walter Rathenau, speaks at Munich University where he meets Thomas Mann, then at the University of Frankfurt on "The Village Mystics of Bengal", stays with Grand Duke of Hesse at Darmstadt, where he gives daily talks at 'the School of Wisdom' by Count Keyserling, addresses a great gathering of German labourers and attends an open-air festival in his honour, visits Vienna, Prague, speaking at both the cities to large and enthusiastic audiences, leaves Paris on July 1, catches the India-bound *Morcea* at Marseilles and arrives in Bombay on July 16, 1921

"The Call of Truth"

FROM Bombay comes straight to Santiniketan in the midst of the Non-co-operation movement at its height, great pressure is put upon

takes him to be. Racially he belongs to the noble Brahmin caste of Bengal. Thanks to some lucky hereditary circumstances his family has always produced eminent men since the twelfth or thirteenth century of our era. Rabindranath's grandfather was in his day the greatest nobleman of Bengal. His father was a true saint and an eminent religious reformer. Rabindranath writes poetry and composes songs at one and the same time and as one whole with that self-evidence with which a flower blossoms. Once he said to us when he was in our Darmstadt home "I cannot help it always, year in year out, blossoms come out of me as they do in our tropical flowering plants, but whilst with those that which has once blossomed immediately after withers with me everything is preserved. That is perhaps something wrong. Rabindranath has truly created the Bengali nation with his songs and thus laid the foundation stone for the future Indian Nation.

"Tagore is one of the greatest noble men one of the truest aristocrats that I have ever seen. He has that distinction from all which makes a true king, the consciousness of the value of words of the aristocrat and the poet alike. Above all however, Rabindranath embodies in himself more future and more distant future than any other known, not only the transition to the new as Gandhi does in India but future perfection. He combines in himself the East and the West. He is one of the few visible living representatives of that occultic man to whom (see my book, *World in the Making*), after the sufferings of the revolutionary period are over all positive future belongs."

him from all sides to join it, against the whole force of the current popular sentiment, he expresses his own views in a paper entitled *Sikshar Mian* (The Meeting of Cultures) read at a meeting organised by *Jatiya Siksha Parishad* (Council of National Education) at the Calcutta University Institute Hall, on August 15, with Sir Santosh Chaudhuri in the chair, repeats the lecture at Alfred Theatre on August 18 with Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray as chairman, Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, the novelist in a paper entitled *Sikshar Brodhi* (The Conflict of Cultures) essays at a reply, the Poet follows with another paper—*Satyer Abhwan* ('The Call of Truth') reads at the Calcutta University Institute on August 29 in which he definitely rejects 'Non-co-operation' as enunciated by Gandhiji, the Mahatma replies in *Young India* with his article 'The Great Sentinel' (*Bartha-mangal* 'The Rain Festival'), a new and unique type of musical soiree produced at the Jorasanko house on the 2nd and 3rd September—the Poet reciting some of his famous rain-poems Maharaja Jagadindranath Roy of Natore accompanying on the *mrtdang*, on the 4th the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad presents an address of welcome, meets Gandhiji at the Jorasanko house, on the 6th September (1921), the meeting taking place behind closed doors and none except Andrews being present. Pearson returns to Santiniketan after five years, L. K. Elmhurst comes with an annual gift of Rs. 50,000 from Mrs. Stright (later Mrs. Elmhurst) for rural reconstruction work at Surul, on November 10 comes Prof. Sullivan Levi the first Visiting Professor of Visva-Bharati who organizes advanced research in Tibetan and Chinese studies.

Visva-Bharati Inaugurated

ON December 22 1921 Visva Bharati is formally inaugurated at a meeting presided over by Dr. Brajindranath Seal (*Pais* 8 1328 B.E.) at which the constitution of Visva-Bharati is adopted with Rathindranath Tagore and Prasanta Mahalanobis as Joint Secretaries (*Jugma-sachra*), makes over to the Visva-Bharati by trust-deed the land, buildings, library and his other properties at Santiniketan, the entire amount of the Nobel Prize money and the copyright of his Bengali books.

WRITES a drama, *Muktadhara* (The Waterfall), and reads it to his friends at his Calcutta residence on the 16th January, 1922, on February 6 is founded *Santiniketan* (Department of Rural Reconstruction of Visva-Bharati), prepares to produce *Muktadhara* but gives up the idea on receipt of the news of the arrest of and sentence to six years' rigorous imprisonment of Gandhiji (March 10), his 62nd birth-

anniversary quietly observed at Santiniketan, presides on July 8 over the Shelley Centenary meeting in Calcutta, attends the memorial meeting in honour of the poet Satvendra Nath Dutta where he reads a most remarkable elegy, *Visva-Bharati Sammilani* is started in Calcutta July, 1922, addresses the students of the Presidency College on his ideals of Visva-Bharati, in August, 1922, at the International Congress of Peace and Freedom held at Lugano, attended by Roman Rolland, Paul Heyse, George Duhamel, Prof. Forel, Bertrand Russell and John Haynes Holmes, a "Tagore Evening" is organised by Kalidas Nag in which these leaders of European thought and others take part, *Sara datsab* is produced in Calcutta, first at Alfred Theatre and then at Madan Theatre (Sept. 16 and 17)—the Poet with members of the Santiniketan staff appearing on the stage, on September 19 the Poet goes to Bombay and then to Poona (with Prof. Levi) where he reads a paper on 'Indian Renaissance' detailing his view on the ideals which Indian universities should strive to attain.

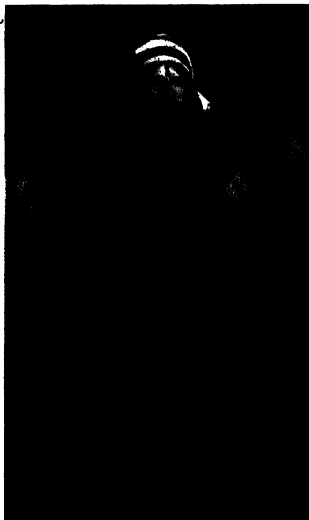
FROM Poona he goes to Mysore, Bangalore, Madras, Coimbatore, Colombo, Trivandrum, Cochin, speaking on "The Vision of Indian History".

The Spirit of Modern Times" ("An Eastern University", "The Forest University of India" and "The Growth of My Life's Work" (Sept. 25 to Oct. 22 1922) comes to Bombay on the 23rd October, goes to Ahmedabad and to the Sabarmati Ashram and then returns to Santiniketan after an absence of about three months, Lord Lytton, Governor of Bengal, visits Santiniketan, writes the poems of *Sisu Bholanath*, his second brother, Satvendra Nath passes away on 9th January, 1923, the Poet visits Sindh (Karachi and Hyderabad), Feb. March 1923, *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* started under his editorship in April 1923, Dr. Tiraporewalla of Calcutta University lays the foundation stone of "Ratanakuthi" (the guest-house for foreign visitors to Santiniketan) for which Sir Ratan Fata had donated Rs. 25,000, spends the summer at Shillong and writes there a drama the *Rakta-karabi* (later translated into English as 'Red Oleanders'), delivers a lecture on Bankimchandra Chatterjee at a meeting of Bhowanipore Literary Society (June 28), discusses, in an interview, current political topics with special reference to Hindu-Muslim relations, expressing himself in favour of the idea of Hindus organising themselves but laying emphasis on the economic aspect of the conflict and suggesting that real unity can only be achieved on a fusion of economic interests of the

I CHRONICLE OF EIGHTY YEARS



In the role of Raghupati in a private performance of his play Visarjan staged in Calcutta 1891-92
Photo: BURNETT & SHEPHERD



In the role of Jalsingha in the same play staged at the Empire Theatre, Calcutta 1922
Photo: B. L. MAHESANOBIS

two communities publishes his considered views on the same subject in a contribution to the July-September issue of the *Vissa Bharati Quarterly* ("The Way to Unity") for three days at the Empire Theatre, Calcutta the drama *Visarjan* ("Sacrifice") is produced (August 25, 27, 28 1923) the old Poet himself appearing with astonishing success is young Jyotsingha, returns to Santiniketan receives a cable from Italy announcing the death in a train accident of Pearson (1924) writes a drama *Rathajatra* issues an appeal for funds for the establishment of a hospital at Santiniketan in memory of Pearson, tours the States in Western India collecting funds for Vissa Bharati on the invitation of Calcutta University delivers a series of lectures on Literature speaking *ex tempore* presides over the annual conference of the Anti-Malarial Societies of Bengal held at Alfred Theatre in Calcutta (Feb 1924)

Plain-speaking in Japan

LEAVES for China from Calcutta on March 21, 1924, accompanied by L. K. Bhambhani, Kshitimohan Sen, Nanda Lal Bose and Kalidas Nag at the invitation of Liang Chi-Chao, President of the Universities Lecture Association of China*, receives great ovations

on route at Rangoon Penang Kuala Lumpur and Singapore arriving at Shanghai on April 12, the Poet explains that the old relation between India and China was "for disinterested" human love and nothing else and on April 17 speaking to a Japanese audience deprecate the Imperialist greed which had got hold of Japan and wishes that Asia should be free from the curse of Western materialism and nationalism speaks in the same strain also very strongly, at another meeting organised by the Anglo-American Society is attacked by English and American

papers for these speeches Chinese students are dissatisfied with his comments against Western ideals which had powerfully captured their imagination reaches Peking on April 23, the National University at Peking accords him a great reception on April 26 Dr Hu Hsi, leader of the Chinese youth (now Chinese Ambassador at Washington) meets the poet and is converted into a great admirer of him which reacts on students in enthusiasm for his cultural mission, after giving a few more lectures in China goes to Japan. (May 29 1924),



—On board the boat to Rangoon en route for China in 1924 off Outram Ghat Calcutta

Left to right Nandalal Bose Kalidas Nag, THE POET and Kshitimohan Sen

* This tour was financed partially by Seth J. K. Birla, who gave Rs. 10,000

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

lectures there chiefly on "International Relations", in course of which he tells the Japanese of his "deep love and respect" for them as a people but deprecates that "when as a nation you have dealings with other nations you also can be deceptive, cruel and efficient in handling those methods in which the Western nations show such mastery"; meets Rashbehari Bose, the exiled Indian revolutionary, who shows great reverence for the Poet and insists on attending to his personal comforts; returns to India on July 21, 1924.

THE POET is drawn into the vortex of an agitation over a speech of Lord Lytton made at Dacca praising the police and casting a slur on the women of Bengal; accedes, under pressure from mutual friends, to the request to meet Lord Lytton and help him to explain himself,—Fazlul Haq being very active to bring about the meeting; letters of Lord Lytton and Tagore simultaneously published in Indian papers on August 23 fail to terminate the agitation; returning to Santiniketan writes a letter to Lord Lytton telling him that "a considerable number of my countrymen are ready to challenge your Government to produce trustworthy evidence in support of your statement"; takes part in a tableaux performance of *Arupratna* at Alfred Theatre (Calcutta).

To South America

SAILS for South America, accompanied by Blmhirst, on September 19, 1924, accepting the invitation from Peru to attend the Centenary Celebration of her Independence; falls ill during the voyage; arrived at Buenos Ayres is warmly received by Argentinians; due to ill health is prevented from going to Peru; rests at a beautiful garden-house at San Isadore as the guest of Madame Victoria Ocampo, writing the poems of *Purabi*, which he dedicates to her ("Vijaya"); takes leave of the President of the Argentine Republic on December 30, 1924.

* Of the Poet's hostess in Buenos Ayres, Madame Victoria Ocampo, Count Keyserling writes thus in his "Significant Memories":

"I have come across very few great women, because those who could have developed into such had remained in this transition period in an embryonic state—whether in this feminine or any other form. In recent years, however, I have come in contact with one woman whose superlative eminence is beyond question, namely, the Argentinian, Victoria Ocampo. A wonderfully beautiful woman of great

1925—1936

AGE 64—69

ON January 4, 1925, boards an Italian boat for Europe; arrives at Genoa (Jan. 21); at Milan at a great meeting, presided over by the Duke of Milan, gives a long discourse on Music, receiving a remarkable ovation; sits for a portrait of him by the famous Italian painter Rietti; proceeds to Venice on the 29th and is taken round the historic city with great honours; returns to India on the 17th February, 1925; his elder brother, Jyotirindranath Tagore passes away at Ranchi on the 4th March, 1925; his 65th birthday is celebrated at Santiniketan; is visited by Gandhiji at Santiniketan (27th May); meets Bishop Fisher of America who comes to see him and Gandhiji; on the sudden death of C. R. Das (June 16, 1925), the Poet, in a four-line elegy, pays to the memory of the great leader a most remarkable and touching tribute; writes to explain his own attitude towards the cult of the *Charka* (the spinning-wheel) preached by Gandhiji; at the request of his friend, Count Keyserling, writes a paper on the subject of marriage, which is published in the latter's famous "Book of Marriage"; attends the performance of *Chitrakumar Sabha* (The Bachelors' Club) on the boards of the Star Theatre in Calcutta,—the Poet having re-shaped it for the stage; re-

vitality, acute intelligence, fine aesthetic feeling, enormous power of work and great social position. Her picture has inspired many, very many views of 'South American Meditations'. In South America there has arisen a new womanhood, based partly upon the traditional Spanish or Roman, and partly upon the positive acquisitions of North America and so far lying historically beyond the range of many European problems.

"There are many people whose women are in a typical sense more important than the men; this is true in a high degree of South American people. Here I can only read the signs. But the experience of South America constitutes in all respects the most important experience of my whole life. There for the first time the soul element in man comes most into prominence. Besides, I have been able to work, as I have seldom done for anything else, for the awakening of a new culture. The person, however, who has helped me most in all this is Victoria Ocampo who, with her striking personality exercised great influence in the southern world, as very few women in the old world have been able to do."

casts for similar performances other plays, e.g., *Sadh-badh* (All Square) out of the story *Karmaphal* (Nemesis) published by H. Bose in 1904; also produces the play *Sesh Raksha* (All's well that ends well) from the story which he shapes out of the drama *Goraya-galad* (Wrong at the Start) and *Griha-Prabesh* from the story *Shesher Ratri* (The Final Night); Sir P. C. Ray in a public speech criticises the Poet and Sir Brajendranath Seal for their staying out of the *Charka* campaign of Gandhiji; the Poet replies in an article in *Sabuj-patra* on *Swaraj Sadhan* (Working for Swaraj), definitely rejecting the *charka* as a means of attaining *Swaraj*, in the same essay, records his views on the political tension, particularly with reference to Hindu-Muslim relations; writes to Romain Rolland a letter of felicitations on the occasion of his 60th birthday in the course of which he reiterates his views against the mechanisation of humanity by Western nations by their "fetish worship of materialistic nationalism"; Prof. Carlo Formichi followed by Prof. G. Tucci arrives from Italy (Nov. 21, 1925) with Mussolini's warmest tributes to the Poet and a gift of books for Visva-Bharati, which they join as professors; Lord Lytton visits Santiniketan (Nov. 24), on the 19th December, the Poet presides over the first session of the Indian Philosophical Congress in Calcutta; receives at Santiniketan, on January 12, 1926, F. S. Marvin, the celebrated American author, sent as a representative of the League of Nations; attends the session of the All-India Music Conference at Lucknow, where he receives the news of the death of his eldest brother, Dwijendranath, at Santiniketan (Jan. 18, 1926).

In East Bengal

GOES to Dacca on 7th February at the invitation of the University; receives addresses from the Dacca Municipality, the Peoples Association and other bodies; speaks at several meetings and functions; also at Mymensingh; at Comilla presides over the anniversary celebrations of the *Abhay Asram* of Dr. Sureshchandra Banerjee; attends the Namasudra (Depressed Class) Conference; is warmly received at Agartala by Maharaj Kumar Brjendrakishore of Tipperah; on his return to Santiniketan, his 65th birthday (May 7, 1926) is celebrated by a gathering representative of many nations; the Maharaja of Porbandar sends a generous contribution for *Kalabharan* (House of Arts) at Santiniketan; *Natir Puja* (The Dancing Girl's Worship) is staged for the first time at Santiniketan.

CHRONICLE OF EIGHTY YEARS



—In May, 1925, Gandhiji paid a visit to the Poet at Santiniketan
Centre: Gandhiji; Left: Andrews; Right: RABINDRANATH

Italy and Mussolini

LEAVES Calcutta on May 12, 1926, on his eighth Foreign Tour accompanied by Rathindranath and Pratima Devi; reaches Naples on May 30 and proceeds to Rome by a special train arranged under express orders of Mussolini; declares himself "glad of this opportunity to see for myself the work of one who is assuredly a great man and a movement that will be certainly remembered in history"; meets Mussolini on May 31, when the Poet is received by the Duce with the remark: "I am an Italian admirer of yours, who has read every one of your books translated into the Italian language"; on June 7, the Governor of Rome holds a great public reception in his honour in the historic Capitol and conveys to the Poet "the greetings of the Eternal City"; the British Ambassador holds another reception; the next day the Poet delivers a speech on "The Meaning of Art"; attends on the 10th afternoon the annual choral concert of the school children of Rome in the ancient

Coliseum*; is accorded a reception at Rome University; received by the King of Italy on June 11; attends a performance of *Chitra* in Italian after a second meeting with Mussolini on June 13, meets the great Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce, who, exiled from Rome to Naples, is specially summoned by Mussolini to meet him; is received by the Leonardo da Vinci Society of Florence on the 16th; the next day at the University speaks on "My School"; at Turin, on June 20, reads an address on "City and Village" (published in the 5th Anniversary Number of *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* as: "Wedded Partners"); after the reading Signora Lipovetzka, a noted Italian songstress, gives three songs of Tagore; from Turin the Poet comes to Switzerland where he is met by numerous victims of fascist oppression; is shown "coloured reports" of his statements in the Italian Press in praise of the Duce,—his utterances and opinions, torn from their context, pre-

*Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis, who accompanied the Poet with his wife, Kani Mahalanobis, on this tour writes:

"The huge Coliseum was one seething mass of human faces. The Choir, which consisted of more than one thousand children, was grouped on a huge wooden gallery. As we entered, the whole audience, numbering perhaps 25 to 30 thousand, rose from their seats and gave such a welcome to the Poet as we shall never forget. The singing was marvellous, more than a thousand voices singing in harmony. At parting the audience rose again and saluted in Roman style. The Poet was visibly touched and raising his arms blessed the children with all his heart"



—In January, 1926, passed away the eldest brother of the Poet, Dwijendranath Tagore, philosopher and poet, universally respected. The two brothers are seen here in a photograph taken in 1914.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

sented in a different light altogether,* arrives at Villeneuve, where he stays at Hotel Byron in the very room in which Victor Hugo had lived for a long time overlooking the lake, with the Castle of Chillon in the background, here he is warmly received by Romain Rolland and meets George Duhamel, J G Trauer, Prof Lorel, Prof Bovet and others, at Zurich (July 6) he meets the wife of Prof Salvadori, a distinguished Italian exiled by Mussolini, who gives him a first-hand account of Fascist atrocities witnessed by herself, writes a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* in which the Poet expresses himself strongly against Fascism of which Mussolini was the High Priest, Prof Formichi from Italy writes a letter of protest to the *Guardian*, saying that as the constant companion and interpreter of Tagore in Italy he (Formichi) denied that Tagore had ever criticised Mussolini, the Poet replies that 'for some time I felt almost choked with the idea that an object lesson was being offered by Italy to show that ample room could be made for human personality in the heart of a political machine', after a day's stay at Lusanna, arrives in Vienna on July 10, here he meets Dr Anglika Bilbimoff the well-known Socialist leader who brings with him Sig Modigliani, the prosecuting counsel at the trial of the murderers of Matteotti, the anti-Fascist Italian member of the Chamber of Deputies.

Like a "Conquering Hero"

IN the beginning of August, accompanied by Prof and Mrs Mahalanobis, who had joined him in Italy, the Poet comes to England, sits to

*Writes Prof V Lewy -

"Tagore's conversations with reporters in Italy were the product of three people: the reporter, the interpreter and Tagore himself. Over and above all this the constant murmur of a fourth element, general conversation, was distinctly in evidence and interfered with all his discussions without his knowledge. Moreover not knowing Italian, he had no means of controlling the result of this connection. Rabindranath Tagore His Personality and Work" by Prof V Lewy (1939)

Writes Prof P C Mahalanobis -

"After leaving Rome we gradually became aware of the fact that a definite attempt was being made to create an impression that the Poet had grown enthusiastic about Fascism. Just before our departure from Turin we therefore managed to secure authentic translations of some of the reports in the Italian Press. On the whole, our impression was that although a part of the demonstrations in Rome might have been organised under Fascist influence, there could be no doubt about the sincerity or the depth of the sentiments of love and adoration aroused in the public mind by the Poet's visit."

—The Poet sat to I Epstein in London in 1926 for a bust of his. This 'head' done by the famous sculptor is now at Birmingham Museum



I Epstein for a bust of him, meets Brailsford, Rothenstein, Robert Bridges (the Poet-Lauriate) and a few other intellectuals, leaves (with Lord Sinha and Prof and Mrs Mahalanobis) on the 21st August, 1926, for Norway, is received by the King of Norway at Oslo, meets at Stockholm—Nansen, Sven Hedin, Bjornsen, Bojer, goes to Copenhagen where he meets the philosopher Hoffding and the famous literary critic George Brandes, proceeds to Germany and arrives at Hamburg (Sept 10), next day comes to Berlin and speaks (Sept 13) at the Philharmonic Hall on "Indian Philosophies"; is received by President Von Hindenburg on the 14th, is entertained by Kurt Wolfe, his publisher, writes from Berlin to the *Manchester Guardian* that although he had admiration for the personality of Mussolini, he could never lend his support to Fascism; is attacked and abused by *Popolo d'Italia*; visits Dresden and Cologne on a lecture tour, comes back to Berlin and leaves for Czechoslovakia; at Prague delivers lectures on "Art Forms" and "Civilisation and Progress" (October 10-15), flies to Vienna in an aeroplane placed at his disposal by the Czech Government and receives a great ovation, composes the first poem of the *Vanavani* (Voice of the Forest) series, lectures at Budapest on the 26th; here he plants a tree near the statue of the famous Hungarian poet Sandor Kisfaludy and places a wreath at the memorial of the distinguished Hungarian

novelist Maurice Jokai, stays at Bilaton Leurd and inscribes the poems for *Ichhan* lectures at the University of Belgrade, is received by King Boris at Sofia (Bulgaria), by King Ferdinand at Bukharest (Rumania), arrives at Athens on November 25, where the Greek King makes him a 'Commander of the Order of the Redeemer', from Greece goes via Turkey to Egypt, reaching Alexandria on November 27 and Cairo on December 1, a meeting of the Egyptian Parliament is adjourned in his honour and the Ministers meet him at a party where he is entertained to Arabic music, King Fuad receives him and presents him with a collection of Arabian books for the *Visva-Bharati*, sails from Alexandria for India concluding his 'great tour of conquest not as a tyrant but as a teacher—the bearer of a new message of synthesis and harmony, culture and enlightenment'.

"Nāṭir Puja" and "Nataraj"

COMES back to India, and receives on arrival in Calcutta, at Howrah Station, a great ovation, the Mayor of Calcutta, J M Sen-Gupta, receiving him at the head of a large body of citizens, goes to Santiniketan on December 19, 1926, the murder of Swami Sradhdhananda at Delhi, in the Christmas week, on the eve of the Indian National Congress at Gauhati, greatly shocks the Poet, who, speaking to a

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gathering at Santiniketan, avers that it is the very helplessness of the weakling that tempts the strong to deeds of sin and crime and appeals for mutual understanding and goodwill; on Jan. 24, 1927 in Calcutta, is staged *Natir Puja*, the Poet appearing in the role of the Buddhist monk; issues on February 3, a remarkable statement protesting against "the primitive form of despotism", which detained young men without trial under Bengal Ordinances; does not approve of the agitation against the Government's proscribing some Bengali books, reminding the writers that there was nothing manly in voicing lachrymose protest on the comfortable assumption that the Government when attacked would not retaliate; devotes himself to creating songs expressible in the form of dances and, on March 18, 1927, produces at Santiniketan, his *Nataraja*, a new type of dance-drama; contributes a poem, *Vichitra*, to the first number of a new Bengalee periodical of the same name, sponsored by Upendranath Ganguli (Editor), Jatinath Ghosh, Kanti Ghosh, Satis Ghatak and Amal Home; the *Vichitra* also publishes *Nataraja* illustrated by Nanda Lal Bose; fills the new magazine with various contribution from month to month; presides over the Hindi Literary Conference on the invitation of the Maharaja of Bharatpore, visits Jaipur, Agra and Ahmedabad and is feted by the Gujrat Literary Society; returns to Santiniketan on April 11; lays the foundation stone of the prayer hall of the Prabartak Sangha at Chandernagore and receives a purse from the Mayor of Chandernagore; goes to Shillong and commences writing for the *Vichitra* a novel under the title *Tin-purush* (Three Generations), which he later names *Yoga-Yog* ('Contacts').

In "Greater India"

ON July 12, 1927, leaves for a tour in Malaya, Java, Bali and Siam (now Thailand), accompanied by Sunitikumar Chatterjee, Surendra Nath

—From a drawing
by a Japanese artist
done in Paris in 1926



Kar and others (his ninth Foreign Tour, financed partially by J. K. Birla, who donated Rs. 10,000); arrives at Singapore on the 20th July and lectures on "The Unity of Man"; Sir Hugh Clifford, the Governor, presiding, after many social functions leaves for Malacca on the 27th, following an untiring round of lectures at various stations, arrives at Penang from where he proceeds to Sumatra; arrives in Batavia on August 22 and reads at a banquet in his honour a poem, "The Indian Pilgrim to Java", an English rendering of his Bengali poem *Vijayalakshmi*, which he had composed on the 21st; on the 23rd leaves for Bali; writes on board the steamer an essay, *Sahitya navatva* (Novelty in Literature), which reflects his reaction against reports of a controversy then current in Bengal over his latest literary essay, "Sahitya-Dharma", which he had contributed to the

Vichitra just before his departure, criticising the ultra-modern tendencies in Bengali fiction, arrives in Bali on August 24, describes the natural beauty of the island in a poem, *Sagarika* (published later in *Mahua*); tours through the island with royal honours; is particularly impressed with Balinese dance-dramas; from Bali, on September 9, he reaches Sourabaya (Java); on the 12th comes to Soetakarta where he opens a bridge and a street which is named after him; visits the great temple of Borobudur; leaves for Siam via Bandung and Batavia; is warmly received by the King and Queen, also the Prince of Chantabun, a great Pali scholar.

Returns home on October 27; recasts his play, *Nataraja*, and produces it, under the name of *Rituranga*, in Calcutta on December 8, 1927; Mcmillan & Co. publish "Fireflies" and "Letters To A Friend"; on January 5, 1928, receives at Santiniketan members of the Indian Science Congress; also receives the great singer Madame Clara Butt; V. Lesny, Professor of Sanskrit at the German University at Prague (Czechoslovakia), comes to Visva-Bharati as Visiting Professor in succession to Prof. William Winternitz; writes in *Prabasi* and the *Modern Review* on the conflict between the staff and students of the City College over Saraswati Puja celebration, deprecating the demand of the latter to perform the worship against the established traditions of the College (a Brahmo institution); attends, as President, a meeting at his Calcutta residence, arranged to settle the acute differences between two sections of Bengali literateurs on the



—Prof. V. Lesny receives the Poet at Prague with Prof. and Mrs. P. C. Mahalanobis: 1926

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

ultra-modern tendencies in literature, his sixty-seventh birthday is celebrated in Calcutta (May 7, 1928)—the Poet being weighed against his own books which were then given away to public libraries, the ceremony following the traditional Indian custom (*tula-dan*) of kings being similarly weighed against gold, which used to be given away to the deserving poor

To Sri Aurobindo

ON May 12, 1928 the Poet leaves Calcutta for England to deliver the Hibbert Lectures at Oxford but falls ill at Madras and cancels the voyage, spends a restful week at Adyar accepting Mrs. Besant's invitation, proceeds from Madras to Colombo halting *en route* at Pondicherry to pay, on May 29, a visit to Sri Aurobindo, records his impression of the visit in the *Modern Review**, visits Ceylon and comes to Bangalore on the way back to the invitation of Brajendranath Seal, then Vice-Chancellor of Mysore University, here he concludes his novel, *Sesher Kabila* ('The Last Poem') returns to Santiniketan at the end of June, in August, 1928 takes part in Calcutta at the Centenary of the Brahmo Samaj preaching a sermon from the pulpit of Sadharan Brahmo Samaj on 'The Message of Rammohun Roy', sends a written speech to be read at the Conference of All-India Libraries Association, held in Calcutta during Christmas, Lord Irwin (now Lord Halifax), the Viceroy of India, visits Santiniketan on December 17, writes and publishes the poems of *Mahua*, the Poet presides at the Parliament of Religions held in Calcutta on January 28, 1929

In Canada

INVITED by the National Council of Education of Canada to participate at its Triennial Conference,

Wrote the Poet —

*At the very first sight I could realize that he had been seeking for the soul and had gained it, and through this long process of revelation had accumulated within him a silent power of inspiration. His face was radiant with an inner light and his serene presence made it evident to me that his soul was not crippled and cramped to the measure of some tyrannical doctrine, which takes delight in inflicting wounds upon life.

I felt that the utterance of the ancient Hindu Rishi spoke from him of that equality which gives human soul its freedom of entrance into the All. I said to him, you have the Word and we are waiting to accept it from you. India will speak through your voice to the World, 'Harken to me'

Years ago I saw Aurobindo in the atmosphere of his earlier heroic youth, and I sang to him, 'Aurobindo, accept the Salutation from Rabindranath'

To-day, I saw him in a deeper atmosphere of reticent richness of wisdom and again say to him in silence, 'Aurobindo accept the Salutation from Rabindranath'

leaves Calcutta, on February 26, 1929, accompanied by A. K. Chanda and Sudhindra Dutt, reaches Tokyo (March 26) where he stays for two days as the guest of the famous Japanese newspaper *Asahi Shimbun*, arrives at Vancouver on April 6 and delivers at the Conference his famous lecture on 'The Philosophy of Leisure', next day speaks there on 'The Principles of Literature', visits the Sikh shrine at Vancouver on April 12 and on April 14 delivers his farewell speech in Canada, invited by the Universities of Harvard, Columbia, California and Detroit he reaches Los Angeles on April 18, and, following the loss of his passport, experiences at the hands of the Emigration Officers the 'special treatment' accorded to 'a representative of the Asiatic peoples, in Oriental and a coloured man', as a protest he cancels his American tour and embarks for Japan on April 20, his birthday is celebrated on board the Japanese boat by the Captain and passengers, reaches Yokohama on May 10 lectures at Tokyo on 'Oriental Culture and Japan's Mission', fondly hoping that 'Japan will reveal an aspect of civilisation which is generally ignored in other parts of the world it should be greatly rich in the wealth of human relationship—even in politics' is entertained by Marquis

*Referring to Japan's domination of Korea the Poet said on the occasion

'No great nation for the sake of self preservation can allow such weak spots in its neighbourhood to remain out of its control for that is sure to afford vantage ground to its enemies and neither is it safe for the weaker people themselves to be left alone. And therefore the problem before the Koreans is to cultivate the moral strength which will enable them to establish a mutual relationship honourable for both sides. The moral danger is no less great for the people who unfortunately have the evil opportunity of exercising absolute power upon a weaker race. And for the sake of keeping up a high standard of national character which, after all, is the only source of permanent strength for the people it is imperatively necessary for the ruling nation to allow the subject race to find in themselves enough strength to be able to remind their rulers that they have to be just, honest, sympathetic and respectful. It is meet for the victors to maintain the pride of their righteousness by allowing rights to those who cannot forcibly wrench it away from them and those who, as human beings have their inalienable claim upon human sympathy. You can establish your lasting kindness if you can help your subjects to greatness and to self-government by training them up into self-confidence and bringing out into light all their latent power of self-expression. You must know that the day comes when the defeated have their chance for revenge, that peoples have long memories and wrongs rankle deep in their heart, times of trouble are sure to come to all nations when the weak can bring fatal disaster to the stronger. The warnings of providence are often silent, and politicians do not heed them. They have not the far-sighted vision, they live in the dusky dawn of the immediate present. And therefore I appeal to you as representatives of

Okuma, leaves for India on June 8; *en route* is received cordially in Indo-China by the French Government and the people, arrives in Madras on July 3 and Calcutta on July 5, 1929.

IN September, 1929, the Poet delivers two lectures—*Sahityer Swarup* and *Sahityer Bichar*—under the auspices of the 'Rabindra-parichaya Sabha' (Tagore Society) of the Presidency College, recasts his old drama *Raja-o-Rani* as *Lapali*, which is staged at his Calcutta residence consecutively on 26th, 28th, 29th September and 1st October—the old Poet appearing in the role of the young King Vikram, Prof. Takagaki, a famous exponent of the art of *Ju-jitsu*, comes to Santiniketan at Tagore's invitation, the Poet having felt that Bengalee boys and girls stood in great need of training in this art of



—From a photo taken in Berlin in 1930 when he exhibited his pictures there

self-defence, takes seriously to painting to which he devotes much time, at the invitation of the Gaekwar, lectures at Baroda (January 26, 1930) on 'Man the Artist', detained unavoidably in the way, fails to attend—much to the chagrin of the organi-

your people, win their love who you can be foolish enough to bully into a sudden subjection, make them trustworthy by trusting them and by respecting them, train them into self respect which is for your own good. Let the best mission of statesmanship be carried on in an atmosphere of sympathy and understanding, in the grateful heart of a people the best of all back-grounds for the creation of the national genius. And before I leave, let me hope that I have not hurt the susceptibility of my audience when, in a genuine spirit of sympathy, I have offered them my message, thereby offering the best homage that I can render them."



Ukindsanath Jayar

J. S. Wain

all the delights that I have felt
in life's fruits and flowers
let me offer to thee
at the end of the quest
in a perfect unity of love.

After a pastel

New York 1930



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After a marble bust

New York, 1930



With the leaders of the Sixth Indian National Congress in Calcutta, 1890

Seated left to right W. C. Bonnerjee, Pherozshah Mehta (President)

Standing left to right Nalin Behari Sarkar, Monomohan Ghosh

THE POET, Hem Chandra Mallick, Shelley Bonnerjee.



The closing scene of 'Dak-Ghar' (Post-office), 1917

Staged at the Jorasanko House before a distinguished gathering of political leaders assembled in Calcutta for the Indian National Congress presided over by Mrs. Annie Besant. The Poet appeared on the stage supported by his nephews Gaganendranath and Abanindranath and his son Rathindra.

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sers and disappointment of the delegates,—the nineteenth session of the Bengali Literary Conference (of which he was President-elect), his elder sister, Swarnakumari Devi, taking the presidential chair at the last moment (Feb. 2, 1930); on February 10, at Surul, Sir Stanley Jackson, the Governor of Bengal, opens a Conference of the workers of Co-operative Societies and announces a capital grant for Sriniketan of Rs. 5,000 only and a yearly grant of Rs. 1,000 for three years only, the insufficiency of the grant adding to the keenness of adverse public criticism.

Emergence as a Painter

ON March 2, 1930, Rabindranath proceeds from Calcutta on his Eleventh Foreign Tour accompanied by his son, daughter-in-law and W. Ariam (Private Secretary); reaching Marseilles on the 26th, stays at Cap Martin near Monte Carlo as the guest of M. Kalin; meets here President Masaryk of Czecho-Slovakia; opens an exhibition of his own pictures in Paris at the Galerie Pigalle (arranged by his Argentine friend Madame Victoria O'Campo) on May 2, with 125 exhibits; his sixty-ninth birthday is celebrated in Paris; goes to London on May 11 and then to Birmingham where he receives the news of the happenings in India [Gandhiji's salt satyagraha, the Dandi March, his arrest and internment, the armoury raid at Chittagong, Martial Law at Sholapur, Viceregal Ordinances declaring the Congress as an illegal body, the Hindu-Muslim riots at Dacca] which impel him to declare in an interview with the *Manchester Guardian* (May 16) against the repressive measures by the "bureaucratic irresponsible government meting out cruel and arbitrary punishment to entirely inoffensive persons . . .

. . . in the high-sounding name of law and order" and pleads for concerted action by the best minds of East and West as "the present complications cannot be dissipated by repression and a violent display of physical power"; comes to Oxford on the 17th and on the 19th, at Manchester College, delivers his first Hibbert Lecture (later published by Allen & Unwin as "Religion of Man"); returns to London to discuss Indian affairs with Wedgwood Benn, Secretary of State for India; addresses an annual meeting of Quakers, being the first speaker not belonging to that community invited to address such a meeting within 252 years past; is heckled at the conclusion of his address for his remarks against British rule in India and replies: "Realize yourselves in our place and recall the time when your own brothers in America wanted to secure their freedom with their blood"; returning to Oxford delivers his concluding speech (Hibbert Lectures) on the 26th, at



Oxford with L. P. Jacks, Principal, Manchester College and Editor of 'The Hibbert Journal': 1930

the Chapel of Manchester College, to one of the most crowded audiences ever seen there—the Principal of the University College, Sir Michael Sadler, declaring: "We shall never forget in Oxford the gift you have given us and the inspiration you have brought to us"; returning to Birmingham, speaks there on the 'Ideals of Education in East and West'; attends an exhibition of his paintings on June 2; writes a letter to the *Spectator* (June 7) on the political situation in India paying a remarkable tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his "new technique of revolution"; visits Elmhurst's school, Dartington Hall, at Totnes (Devonshire),

proceeds to Dresden; next to Munich, where a civic reception is accorded to him at the ancient Town Hall; witnesses the famous "Passion Play" at Oberammergau, which impresses him deeply; after a rapid tour through many cities, "travelling like royalty", goes to Denmark; an Exhibition of his paintings is opened at Copenhagen on August 9; goes to Geneva and spends there a few days; hears there of communal riots at Dacca and writes to the *Spectator* (Aug. 30, 1930), complaining bitterly against the silence maintained by English newspapers over the affair and maintaining that "men of vicious character" have been brought in at Dacca "and "unspeakable atrocities have occurred."

PROCEEDS to Germany, reaching Berlin on July 11, 1930; meets the members of the Reichstag on the 12th; meets Einstein on the 14th; after the opening of an Exhibition of his paintings, at Gallery Moller, on July 16th,

In Soviet Russia

LHAVES Geneva to visit Russia accompanied by Soumyendra Tagore (his grand-nephew) and Amiya

RABINDRANATH TAGORE



—With

M. Romain Rolland
at Villeneuve,
Switzerland, 1926

L



Courtesy "Dipali"

Chakraverti (his Literary Secretary), Dr. Harry Timbres (his Medical attendant), W. Ariam (his Private Secretary)*, arrives at Moscow on September 11, 1930, received at the White-Russian Baltic Station by the representatives of the Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS), next day, at Voks Building, a reception is held, Prof F N Petroff, the President of the Society, taking the chair, on the evening of the same day a concert is arranged in his honour jointly by the VOKS and the Moscow

Association of writers at their club, where he meets Prof Kogan (President of the Academy of Arts), Prof Pinkevitch (Director of the Second Moscow State University) Mme Litvinov Mme Ognev, Mme Vera Inber, Iosif Gladkov, Issey and other Soviet artists and authors, visits the Pioneers' Commune (the organisation for giving vocational training to orphans) on the 14th, the Peasants' Home on the 16th, an Exhibition of his paintings opened, on September 17 at the State Moscow Museum of New Western Art, is welcomed by Soviet art critics as "a very great event in the history of art", visits Moscow Art Theatre and witnesses the performances of "Peter the Great", Tolstoy's "Resurrection", and "Baderka" (an Indian love legend) at the First State Opera House, meets students

and tells them of his own school in India, visits the Industrial Labourers' Commune, Central Ethnographical State Museum, the Children's Creche and Kindergarten of the Moscow Dynamo Works, the Museum of Handicrafts, the Museum of Revolution and several other institutions, delivers his farewell speech at a big reception organised in the Central House of Trade Unions on September 24, when the Soviet poet Shingalee recites the "Ode to Rabindranath", specially composed for the occasion, and the author Galperin recites in Russian three of Tagore poems and the actor Simonov "Stages select scenes from "Post-office" (Dak-Ghar)

* In 1926, the Poet had received an invitation from the Soviet Government, but was taken seriously ill with influenza at Vienna and therefore, had to postpone the visit. On this occasion he was invited personally by Lunacharsky, who came to see him in Berlin on behalf of the Soviet Government.



—With Albert Einstein in Berlin 1930

LEAVES Russia on the 25th for Germany, and from there sails for America on October 3, 1930, writes to the *Spectator* (November 19) from America a letter deploring Gandhiji's hesitation to participate at the Round Table Conference, which, in the Poet's opinion, "could have been used as a platform wherefrom to send his voice to all those all over the world who truly represent the future history of man", on November 25, at the Biltmore Hotel (New York), attends a great public banquet organized in his honour by four hundred leading citizens, is received by President Hoover, delivers a public address at Carnegie Hall (New York) on December 1, and on Dec 7, speaks on "The First and Last Prophet of Persia" at a meeting under the auspices of the Bahais, accepts the offer of Ruth St Denis, the celebrated dancer, of raising funds through a few dance-recitals by her of his poems but gives away the

money thus received to be spent in giving relief to the unemployment at New York, exhibitions of his paintings are opened at Boston and New York and received by many art-critics with enthusiasm, meets Will Durant, whose book "The Case for India" had been prohibited entry into Bengal, returns to England on December 22, declines to accept the invitation to act as a mediator in the Round Table Conference wrangle over the communal question, is entertained by the Editor of the *Spectator* at a luncheon at Hyde Park Hotel (January 8, 1931), where he meets and have a long talk with Bernard Shaw, comes back home in February 1931

1931-1935

AGE 70-74



—With Bernard Shaw in London 1930

RETURNING to India writes a new dance-drama *Nabin* which is staged first at Santiniketan and then in Calcutta (Empire Theatre, March 14), the Poet reciting poems which are interpreted and visualised through dance and music his seventieth birthday is celebrated at Santiniketan and also at many places all over India his letters from Russia—*Russian Chithi*

—are collected and published on his seventieth birthday revealing the "profound spiritual and poetic insight and the deep social consciousness with which he had closely followed the most important page of human history "

"Rabindra-Jayanti" Inaugurated

ON the 16th May, 1931, at the Calcutta University Institute Hall, a large gathering representative of all sections of the community with Mahamahopadhyaya Hara Prasad Sastri (President, *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad*) in the chair, conveys to the Poet its warmest felicitations on his completing the seventieth year of his life and decides to celebrate the occasion in a fitting manner in Calcutta,—thus inaugurating **RABINDRA-JAYANTI**. A Tagore Septuagenary Celebrations Committee is appointed with the Poet's life-long friend the great scientist Jagadis C Bose as President, Jatindra Nath Basu as General Secretary and Shivama Prasad Mookerjee and Amal Home as Joint Secretaries. On the 18th July, 1931 this Committee adopts a Scheme of Celebration, prepared by Amal Home, deciding to celebrate the event by a festival extending over an entire week during Christmas (1931) devoted to the observance of a comprehensive programme bringing out and emphasising the Poet's life-work, sends a poem of greetings to the youths of the Buxa Concentration Camp, detained under Viceregal Ordinance, in reply to their birthday felicitations, the poem is returned by the Censor to Amal Home, who had forwarded it on behalf of the Poet

—In New York in 1930, the Poet met Helen Keller the famous American blind deaf-mute, who has not only learnt to read, write and talk, but also to hear" by touch. Here she "listens" to the Poet by placing her fingers lightly on his lips as they move



Courtesy : "Dipali"

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତା
 ବନ୍ଦୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ଚାନ୍ଦିନୀର ସ୍ତବ୍ଧ
 ବିଶାଳାକାର ମନ୍ଦିର ଦିନ ଅନ୍ଧାରରେ ଘେରି ରହିଲା ।
 ସିନ୍ଦୂର ବିହୀନ ଗର୍ଭ, ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ନାହିଁ ମାରିବ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ।
 ଶାନ୍ତାବତୀର ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇ
 ଓହ୍ଲାଇ ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ଗୋର
 ଶକ୍ତିର ଓହ୍ଲାଇ ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ଗୋର ଶାନ୍ତାବତୀର କି ଅନ୍ଧାରରେ ॥
 ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତା ଚିନ୍ତା ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର, ଅନ୍ଧାର ମାରିବ ଦିନ ମାରିବ
 ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତା ଶାନ୍ତାବତୀର ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ଗୋର ।
 ଶାନ୍ତାବତୀର ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇ
 କି ଶାନ୍ତାବତୀର ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇ
 ଶାନ୍ତାବତୀର ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ଶାନ୍ତାବତୀର ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ॥
 "ଅନ୍ଧାର ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇ" ଶାନ୍ତାବତୀର ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇ
 ଶାନ୍ତାବତୀର ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ଶାନ୍ତାବତୀର ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇ
 ଶାନ୍ତାବତୀର ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ଶାନ୍ତାବତୀର ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇ
 ଶାନ୍ତାବତୀର ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ଶାନ୍ତାବତୀର ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ॥

ଦିନ
 ଶାନ୍ତାବତୀ

। ଶାନ୍ତାବତୀ
 ଶାନ୍ତାବତୀ

circulation and a nerve-racking strain of an indefinitely suspended fate"; trounces in a letter to the daily press an Anglo-Indian paper "giving repeated expressions of the Christian sentiment of sympathy for the warders who had murdered the prisoners in their charge"; spends the autumn at Darjeeling, lends his support in an

* This letter when sent for publication to the Statesman forwarded by the Editor of the Municipal Gazette on behalf of the Poet was returned to him with the following letter from Sir Alfred Watson

THE STATESMAN Ltd
 6, Chowringhee
 Calcutta, 3rd Nov., 1931

Dear Mr Home

I must definitely refuse to publish from Dr Rabindranath Tagore or anybody else a letter which accuses men of murder who have never been tried on that count. I return the letter to you.

It is pleasant to be back in India and pleasant to know that in these times I have many friends like your self among Indians.

I am sincerely yours
 Alfred H. Watson

[The Editor, The Statesman]

I, The Editor, The Statesman

Sir

We have recently seen in Anglo-Indian paper repeated expressions of the Christian sentiment of sympathy for the warden who had under their charge the prisoners at High whom they murdered. The perpetrator of this crime were pitied on ground of nervous strain under which according to the writer they certainly cannot be expected to retain judicial calm. These high-strung individuals who enjoy freedom and self-respect and live in comfortable barracks—have been soothed with paragraphs of tender consolation for their concerted homicidal attack, under cover of darkness, on defenceless prisoners undergoing the most barbaric system of incarceration and a nerve-racking strain of an indefinitely suspended fate.

Most crimes indeed are the outcome of some severe strain—uncontrollable urge of temptation, pain and anger reaching a bursting point when considerations of social responsibility and consequences are recklessly forgotten. Such crimes, though committed under intense nervous-tension and a state of psychological night-mare, are not condoned by law, and for that reason fear and self-control exercise check against criminal propensities. But if the milk of human kindness be carefully reserved for official murder, and if a special standard of justice can ever be successfully advocated—under the plea of delicate nerves—only for those who already harbour in their mind an expectation of impunity, and who, as deputised guardians of law and order, have broken almost with swaggering exultation, then it will amount to a positive insult to the solemn principle of justice universally declared in all civilized legal codes and will create an effect upon the public mind which no amount of seditious propaganda can ever do.

On the other hand I never for a

moment expect that our political fanatics who have been judged guilty by any

The High Protest

THE Poet visits Bhupat at the invitation of the Nawab, terrible floods, famine and pestilence devastate North Bengal to which is added acute communal trouble between Hindus and Muslims on which he writes in the Prabasi warning his countrymen against such fatal fratricide helping "the third party" in keeping India under perpetual political domination, on the 24th, 25th, 27th and 28th September is produced in Calcutta a novel musical festival, *Sisuritha* (The Child) in aid of the flood-stricken in North Bengal, on September 30 the Sanskrit College in Calcutta confers on the Poet the title of *Kabi-sarabhowma*, on the 13th October, when he is contemplating a trip to Darjeeling to recoup his health, occurs the tragedy at the High Detention Camp, where the guards shoot two young Bengali prisoners dead and wound a large number, the Poet again comes to the fore and becomes the spearhead of outraged public protest at a meeting, which convened to be held at the Town Hall is transferred, owing to unprecedented crowd, to the foot of the Ochterloney Monument in the Calcutta Maidan; he condemns "the concerted homicidal attack, under cover of darkness, on defenceless prisoners undergoing the most barbaric system of in-

The poem above addressed to the Bengali youths detained under the Preventive Ordinance of 1931 at Buxa fort in reply to their address of felicitations on the Poet's seventieth birthday was stopped by the Censor. It came back to the Editor of this journal, who had forwarded it on behalf of Rabindranath. Later it appeared in the Prabasi.

A CHRONICLE OF EIGHTY YEARS



—In October 1931 when the guards at the High Detention Camp shot 120 young Bengali prisoners dead the Poet—at a great meeting held in the Calcutta Maidan at the foot of the Ochilstone Monument—gave expression to the anguish and indignation of the outraged public. Here he is seen reading his address with J. M. Sen-Gupta to his left.

PHOTO: KANCHAN MUKHERJEE

essay on "The Weavers of Bengal" to the movement set on foot by Sir P. C. Ray that Bengal should not depend on Bombay mills to clothe herself, celebrates at Santiniketan the 50th birth-anniversary of Nandalal Bose, the artist.

"Rabindra-Jayanti" Celebrated

COMES to Calcutta on the 23rd December, 1931, to attend the RABINDRA-JAYANTI celebrations held in the Christmas week in pursuance of the resolution adopted at the inaugural

meeting of the 18th May, 1931.—The Jayanti Week starts in the morning of the 25th December with the opening of a remarkable arts and crafts exhibition and a *mela* (fair) at the Town Hill and the adjoining grounds by the Maharaja Bahadur of Tipperah,—the Poet being himself present and going round the rooms and galleries exhibiting (i) a hundred of his own drawings and paintings, (ii) manuscripts and different editions of his works—English and Bengali, (iii) translations of his works in different languages of the world, (iv) works on himself, (v) portraits, etc., of the Poet at different periods of his life, (vi) gifts and pre-

sents to the Poet from different countries of the world, (vii) arts and crafts products of the Visva-Bharati, (viii) old and new Bengali art products and artistic home industries and (ix) pictures of the Bengal School of Painting and Indian paintings, old and new.—As a back-ground to the exhibition (organised by Kedarnath Chatterjee assisted by Surendranath Kar) is also held a *mela* (fair) with stalls of various indigenous products, and entertainments, e.g., *Kathakata*, *fatra*, *kirtan*, *baul gan*, folk songs and folk dances, sports and athletics.—The same afternoon sits a literary conference under the presidency of Sarat

properly constituted court of justice should go unpunished though their nerves may have been completely upset by harrowing sights and cowardly crimes that escape retribution. They must pay in full the cost of what they may feel as their obligation to their outraged kindred or their own insulted humanity. Our students no doubt learnt by heart through European school masters their lessons from the western history of the struggle for freedom copiously strewn with the records of criminal violence openly done or secretly plotted by both sides, such as was recently exhibited in Ireland. But, all the same, crimes are crimes and their legal consequences should ever

prove to be inevitable in spite of the well known historical truism amply proved by the Czarist and other autocratic regimes that those who have military and political power in their hands or are favoured and protected by such power, have often defiantly gone through the extreme length of iniquities in a whole sale manner and surreptitious ways avoiding justice and forcibly repressing popular judgment. But fortunately for humanity such policy has never been ultimately successful.

I earnestly appeal to the Government and our people at the same time that there should immediately be a truce to the ring-dance of vengeance and violence

perpetually rushing round a vicious circle. Giving vent to one's anger and annoyance may be natural to common humanity but it is never statesmanlike for our rulers nor wise for the ruled. Mutual indulgence in such angry passions are nothing but destructive, hopelessly wasteful, endlessly adding to our miseries and futility and leading to an utter loss of our confidence in the moral manhood of our rulers, which is the true prestige of strength in its magnanimity.

Darjeeling,

Nov 2, 1931

Yours etc.,

Rabindranath Tagore

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Chandra Chatterjee, whose papers, written by well-known Bengali litterateurs dealing with different aspects of Rabindranath's contribution to the Bengali literature and some poems dedicated to the Poet are read.—In the evening is held a Music Festival where thirty-five Tagore songs (beginning from the earliest period of his composition) are sung by well-known singers and a well-trained choir under the leadership of Indira Devi and Dinendra Nath Tagore. The next day, the 20th December, Sir S. Radhakrishnan opens and presides over a conference at which distinguished litterateurs, artists, scholars and educationists, Indian and European, from all parts of India, including special delegates deputed by the different universities, read papers dealing with Rabindranath's contributions to practically all departments of human culture.—In the evening is continued the Music Festival with thirty-five more songs from Tagore.

Felicitations

ON the 27th December 1931 before an assemblage of several thousands of people representing all sections of the community gathered in front of the Town Hall (where on the street, facing the steps of the historic building, a dais has been erected), the Poet is presented with addresses of felicitations on behalf of the Corporation

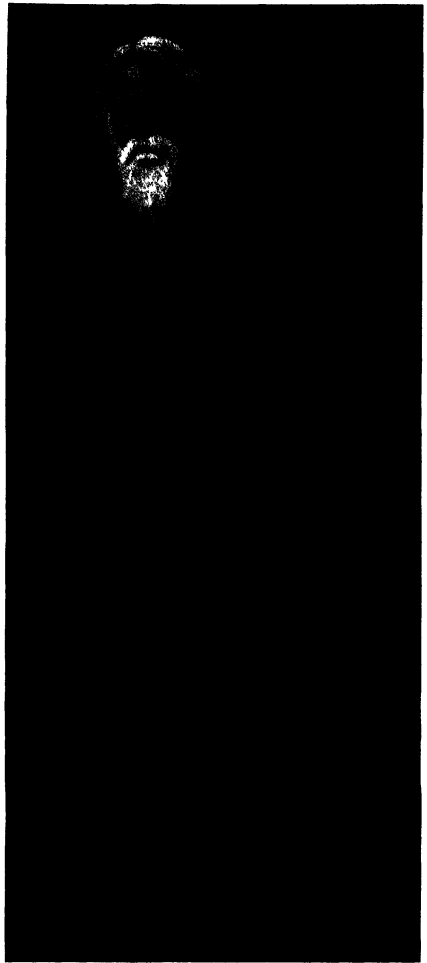
of Calcutta (read by the Mayor Dr B. C. Roy), the *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad* (read by its President Sir P. C. Ray), the *Hindi Sahitya Sammelan* (read by Ambika Prasad Bajpai), the *Prabasi Banga Sahitya Sammelan* (read by Pratiba Devi of Allahabad) and last, on behalf of his countrymen, by the *Rabindra-Jayanti-Parishad* (The Tagore Septuagenary Celebration Committee), which was read by the greatest Bengali poetess Kamini Ray, the address itself being written by Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, the famous Bengali novelist.—The Poet replies to all the addresses separately, receiving a remarkable ovation at the end.—He is also presented with *The Golden Book of Tagore*—bearing the homage of poets and authors, artists and scientists, politicians and statesmen of thirty countries.—by Mr. Ramananda Chatterjee (who had edited the Book) on behalf of the Publication Committee.—On the 28th, 29th and 30th is staged *Natir Puja* at the Jorasanko house of the Poet, he himself appearing in the role of the Buddhist monk.—The *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad* holds a reception on the 29th December, when a marble bas-relief portrait of the Poet, presented by Amal Home, is unveiled by Sir P. C. Ray, President of the Parishad.—The students of Calcutta also celebrate the occasion by presenting the Poet with an address, on the 31st December at the Senate Hall of the University of Calcutta to this he replies by reading

a paper in Bengali, dwelling on the growth of his poetic life, which he had originally prepared for reading at the public reception on the 27th December but abandoned the idea because of its length and the cosmopolitan character of the gathering.—The *RABINDRA-JAYANTI* celebration, which was to be held for a week from the 25th to the 31st December, 1931 is extended till the 5th January, 1932, when at the news of the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi, Subhas Chandra Bose and other leaders and the arrest of Jnananjan Neogi, the Secretary of the *Jayanti-Mela* the Celebration Committee, in view of the political situation, comes to a decision to close the function.

THE Poet is greatly agitated over Gandhi's arrest and cables to the British Prime Minister protesting against 'the sensational policy of indiscriminate repression being followed by the Indian Government causing permanent alienation of our people from yours', issues a statement on the "Independence day" (January 26, 1912), which, however, is prevented from being fully published by the Bengal Censor, writes many poems at his river-side residence of Khurda, among them being a notable one on Gandhi entitled *Prasna* (The Question) published first in the *Prabasi* and later in his *Parishesh* attends the opening of



—On the 27th December, 1931, before an assemblage of several thousands of people representing all sections of the community gathered in front of the Town Hall where, on the street, facing the steps of the historic building, against the North gates of the Bengal Legislative Council House, a 'dais' had been erected, the Poet was presented with addresses of felicitations by the Corporation of Calcutta, the *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad*, the *Hindi Sahitya Sammelan*, the *Prabasi Banga Sahitya Sammelan* and the *RABINDRA-JAYANTI PARISHAD* (the Tagore Septuagenary Celebration Committee)—Pandit Vidhusekhar Shastri is seen reciting the 'mangalacharanam' while the girls of the *Santimiketan* hold the 'arghyapatram'.



1931

By
S. Ghosh

From a photo taken at Santiniketan
on the eve of the Rabindra-Jayanti

Engraved & Printed by
Bharat Phototype Studio

Academic Reception to Dr Rabindranath Tagore by the University of Calcutta

August 6, 1932

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

FRONT ROW (from left to right)—1 Prof Nibaran Ch Ray 2 Principal A Cameron 3 Dr Pramatha Nath Banerjee 4 Principal H C Maitra 5 Mr J P Sarbadhikary
6 Syed Abu Yusuf Ahmed Reading a Laudatory Poem in Persian in honour of the Poet 7 Sir R N Mookerjee 8 Dr RABINDRA
NATH TAGORE 9 THE VICE-CHANCELLOR (Sir Hasan Suhrawardy) 10 Dr Kedar Nath Das 11 Dr J N Maitra

BACK ROW (from left to right)—1 Dr Sumti Kumar Chatterjee 2 Mr R W Wolfenden 3 Dr Mridendra Lal Mitter 4 Principal S N Das Gupta 5 Mr Prabhat Banerjee
6 Sir D P Sarbadhikan 7 Mr H R Wilkinson 8 Sir P C Mitter (reading the Programme) 9 Mr H E Stapleton 10 Sir C V
Raman (only the turban is visible) 11 Sir Nilratan Sarker (reading the Programme) 12 Honble Mr Abdul Hamid (Minister of Education
Assam) 13 Principal B M Sen 14 Sir Zahid Suhrawardy 15 Prof S C Mahalanobis (only the head is visible)

A CHRONICLE OF EIGHTY YEARS

the exhibition of his paintings arranged by Mukul Dey at the Government Art School, Calcutta, in February; takes a trial flight in a Dutch aeroplane and decides to fly to Persia in response to the invitation of the Shah; meets at Santiniketan a delegation of the 'Society of Friends' from England.

The Roses of Iran

ON April 11, 1932, accompanied by his daughter-in-law "takes off" at the Dum Dum aerodrome on a K. L. M. plane, preceded by his two other companions—Kedarnath Chatterjee and Amiya Chakraverti; on crossing the Persian border receives in the plane a wireless message from the Government of Persia welcoming him; is received at Bushire on April 13 by the Governor and entertained at a public banquet; is royally received at Shiraz (April 16) where he spends a few days; pays his respects at the tomb of Hafiz; comes to Ispahan on the 22nd, via the ancient city of Persepolis; after a Civic Reception at Ispahan, goes to Teheran where he spends two weeks amidst a glorious round of civic, diplomatic and private receptions; on May 2 is received by His Majesty Reza Shah Pehlevi to whom the Poet presents a poem written in his honour; at the Shah's orders his seventy-second birthday is celebrated with great eclat; receives invitation from Iraq and on his way back to India meets King



—During the Poet's visit to Persia in the summer of 1932, his seventy-second birthday was celebrated at Teheran when "it was roses roses all the way"

Faisal at Baghdad, where he is accorded a Civic Reception; returns to Calcutta, by air, on June 3, 1932.

Gandhiji's "Fast unto Death"

GREATLY perturbed at the news of Gandhiji's resorting to his "fast unto death" (September 20, 1932) in protest against the sinister motives behind the Communal Award* cancels arrangements for attending as President the forthcoming birthday celebrations of Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, and, after issuing a fervent public appeal for removal of caste prejudices and differential treatment between Hindus socially, rushes to Poona (Sept. 24) where Gandhiji has been lying at Yerwada Jail; sends an appealing cable to Premier Ramsay Macdonald; on Sept. 26 the news is received of the "Pact", arrived at as a result of Gandhiji's fast, being accepted by the Premier;

Academic Honours

ACCEPTS the invitation of Calcutta University to take the Ramtanu Lahiri Chair of Bengali Literature and also deliver the Kamala Lectures; is presented with an Address from the University at a special Academic Reception on August 6, 1932; receives the news (Aug. 8) of the death in Germany of his only grandson, Nitindranath Ganguly; invited by C. Y. Chintamani of the *Leader* (Allahabad) to give his opinion on the Communal Award, advises his countrymen "to take advantage of the new feeling; of resentment that is sweeping intellectual circles in our country to-day against irrational communal and class differences, come to agreement between ourselves and thus remove the greatest obstacles in the path of our national self-expression"; writes at Santiniketan the prose-poems of *Punatcha* ('Postscript'), the poems of *Parishesh* ('The End') and *Kaler Jatra* ('The March of Time'), which he dedicates to Sarat Chandra Chatterjee on his 57th birthday anniversary.



—The Poet flies back from Persia with his daughter-in-law Prafulla Devi
Photo taken at
Dum Dum Aerodrome: 1932

* The Poet sent the following to Gandhiji on hearing of his fast:

"It is worth sacrificing precious life for the sake of India's unity and her social integrity. Though we cannot anticipate what effect it may have upon our rulers who may not understand its immense importance for our people, we feel certain that the supreme appeal of such self-offering to the conscience of our own countrymen will not be in vain. I fervently hope that we will not callously allow such national tragedy to reach its extreme length. Our sorrowing hearts will follow your sublime penance with reverence and love."

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Gandhiji breaks his fast, the Poet singing by his bed-side one of his favourite songs, writes to the Zamorin a forceful letter on the question of the temple entry of Harijans in Cochin, receives Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya at Santiniketan.

Rammohun Centenary

PRESIDES in Calcutta (December 11) at the Seventieth Birthday Celebration of Sir P C Ray and dedicates to him the brochure, 'Mahatma and Depressed Humanity', visits the Goshala Village Welfare Centre established by Sir Daniel Hamilton in the Sundarbhans, receives Professor Pour-Daur who has been sent to Santiniketan by the Shah of Persia, delivers at Calcutta University the second Kamala Lecture (January, 1933), on January 18 presides over the inaugural meeting of the Rammohun Centenary at the Senate Hall, Calcutta, on the 25th reads at Calcutta University a paper on "Fusion of Knowledge" at Lucknow, on the occasion of a Conference organised by the School of Music (Feb 1933), his daughter-in-law produces, with a batch of students from Santiniketan a Dance drama, *Sapmochan* with great success, the performance is repeated in Calcutta at the Empire

ISSUES a statement to the Press supporting V J Patel's efforts to check the 'campaign of lies' again India then being scoldulous carried on in Western countries (April 1933) goes to Darjeeling sends a telegram to Gandhiji deprecating his intention to enter into a second period of fasting, but the telegram is not received by Gandhiji is the first to sign a leaders' memorial to the Government to release political prisoners, also telegrams to prisoners on hunger-strike at Andamans to desist, records his own and the country's deepest distress at the news of the sudden death of J M Sen-Gupta (July 24, 1933) while under detention sends a message on the occasion of Wilberforce Centenary celebrations at Hull receives Uday Shankar at Santiniketan on September 12, stages at the Madan Theatre in Calcutta *Tasher Desh* ("The kingdom of Cards") also giving recitals from *Chandalika* ("The Untouchable's Daughter"), speaks on Rhythm (*Chhanda*) at Calcutta University (Sept 16), publishes the poem of *Vichitrta* (illustrated) and dedicates the book to Nandalal Bose on his

Visit to Bombay

VISITS Bombay (Nov 1933) with Santiniketan artistes for the "Tagore Drama Week" (organized there by the Calcutta Impresario, Haren Ghosh), Mrs Sarojini Naidu personally looks after arrangements for his stay and his programme in Bombay, performances of his *Sapmochan* and *Tasher Desh* are given by the pupils of Santiniketan, the Poet himself appearing on the stage; exhibitions of his own paintings and those of other artists attached to the "Kalabhavan" of the Visva-Bharati are opened in Bombay and widely appreciated, the Vice-Chancellor of Bombay University entertains the Poet at a dinner, delivers a lecture on 'The Challenge of Judgment' and another on 'The Price of Freedom' (Dec 1), goes to Waltair and delivers at Andhra University Sir Krishnaswami Aiyer lectures (Dec 8, 9, 10), published later as "Man", proceeds to Hyderabad (Dec 12) where H E H the Nizam, who had some years ago made a gift of a lakh of rupees to the Visva-Bharati for a Chair of Islamic Culture, warmly receives him and gives another twenty-five thousand rupees, the Osmania University entertains him at a garden party and the Prime Minister at a State Banquet returns to Calcutta, and on Dec 29 delivers his famous address *Bharatpathik Rammohun* at the Senate Hall on the occasion of Rammohun Centenary celebrations, speaks also at the All-India Women's Conference at Town Hall, D R Jardine, England's Captain in the Test Match between England and India, calls at the Jorasanko house to pay his respects to the Poet the drama *Bangori* and the novel *Dui-bela* ("Two Sisters") are written and published during 1933.

RECRIVES Mrs Naidu at Santiniketan on January 3, 1934 protests against the message of the Mahatma on the Bihar Earthquake (attributing the calamity to divine vengeance on the country for its sin of untouchability) telegraphs to Charles Andrews in England about the earthquake and appeals to all nations for help, expresses himself strongly against the anti-Gandhi agitation then on foot in Bengal, presides in Calcutta at the Jubilee celebration of the Hindusthan Co-operative Insurance Co Ltd, of which his nephew, Surendranath Tagore, was one of the founders, on April 7 speaks at the International Relations Club (founded under the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace)

tained on the following day at the Rotary Club from where his talk on Visva-Bharati is broadcast, on the 11th the Indian Mercantile Chamber of Ceylon presents him with an address, on the 15th the Corporation of Colombo holds a civic reception in his honour, *Sapmochan* is staged for five nights at Colombo and then other plays exhibition of paintings of his own and "Kalabhavan" artists also held, on the 17th gives a recital of his poems, on May 19, visits Pandura and christens an institution started there on the lines of Santiniketan as *Sri-Pall* comes to Kandy and completes there his novel *Char Adhyaya* (Four Chapters) on June 5, goes to North Ceylon and then returns via Madras to Santiniketan on June 28, on August 31 receives Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan who on release from jail comes to meet his son studying then at Santiniketan, publishes with Prof Gilbert Murray two essays on international problems with special reference to the East and the West, opens in Calcutta the Basanti Cotton Mills a Bengali concern, in October again visits Madras at the invitation of the Chief Minister of Madras, Raja of Bobbili on behalf of the citizens on October 22 the Corporation of Madras presents an address at a civic reception on the 24th October speaks on 'Myself and the Bengal Renaissance' from 27 to 30 take place dramatic performances staged by Santiniketan artistes and an exhibition held of Santiniketan arts and crafts the Governor of Madras Sir George Stanley receives the Poet at a garden party at Government House visits Waltair on November 2 as the guest of the Maharani of Vizianagram and addresses the students of Andhra University on the 5th; returns to Calcutta (Nov 6), visits Benares to open a Montessori School for the Hindu University (Dec 2), opens in Calcutta (Town Hall, Dec 27, 1934) the *Prabasi Banga Sahitya Sammilan*, the novel *Malancha* is published, receives at Santiniketan members of the Indian Science Congress who come there on January 6, 1935

A Governor's Visit

SIR John Anderson, Governor Bengal, visits Santiniketan (Feb. 1935), disgusted with the overzealous police "measures of safety" for His Excellency, the Poet has all inmates of Santiniketan removed Santiniketan for the period of his visit, the Governor going round the deserted *Asram*, the same evening the Poet leaves for Benares to attend the Convocation of the Hindu University which confers on him a Doctorate

PROCEEDS to Ceylon on May 1, 1934, with Santiniketan artists, reaches Colombo on the 6th to ent-

A CHRONICLE OF EIGHTY YEARS

speaks at the Allahabad University on the 12th; visits Lahore to preside over the Punjab Students' Conference; meets the leaders of the Sikh community who call on him and visits the Gurdwara; arrives at Lucknow on the 28th and addresses the students at the University on March 1 and 2; his 75th birthday is celebrated on May 7 at Santiniketan, the Poet entering his new residence,—the mud-hut 'Syamali'; his poems of *Sesh-Saptaka* are also published on the same day; is felicitated by the *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad* on May 12; speaks at the function organised by the Mahabodhi Society to observe the birthday of the Lord Buddha; spends the summer at Chandernagore, mostly on his house-boat, on the 21st July Dinendranath Tagore expires in Calcutta, in October *Saradotsav* is staged at Santiniketan with the Poet in the role of 'Sannyasi', receives at Santiniketan the Japanese poet, Noguchi (November 9) with whom, afterwards, he has a controversial exchange of letters on Japan's aggression in China, produces in Calcutta (December 11 and 12) *Raja* in which he appears in the role of 'Thakurda'; writes and publishes *Bithika* ('The Avenue') a book of poems; on December 22, 1935 sends a message of felicitations to the President of the Indian National Congress on the occasion of its Golden Jubilee.



cancels, on account of ill health, his visit to Dacca for the Convocation of the Dacca University, which confers on him the degree of D.Litt. *honoris causa*, on September 5, he sends a message to the World Peace Congress at Brussels, in course of which he warns the delegates: "We cannot have peace until we deserve it by paying its full price, which is,—that the strong must cease to be greedy and the weak must learn to be bold"; gives a discourse at the special service held at the Santiniketan Mandir on Gandhiji's birthday (Oct. 2); on October 10-11, at the Asutosh College Hall, Calcutta, another new dance-drama, *Parisodh*, is staged; on the 11th he attends the sixtieth birthday celebration of the novelist Sarat Chandra Chatterjee and blesses him with an address of felici-



—The Poet spent the summer of 1935 on his house-boat on the Ganges near Chandernagore, which he again visited in 1937 to inaugurate the Bengali Literary Conference which met there on February 21 under the presidentship of Mr. Harendra Nath Datta

PARNAL GOWRAMI

1936-1941

AGE 75—80

READS a paper on "Education Naturalised", in February 1936 during the "Bengal Education Week" in Calcutta; on March 11, 12, 13 and 14, at the New Empire Theatre in Calcutta, produces a new dance-drama, *Chitrangada*; proceeds next on a North Indian tour (for collecting funds for Visva-Bharati) via Patna and Allahabad to Delhi; Gandhiji expostulates about the Poet thus exposing himself to such risk at his age, and an anonymous donor at Delhi, a disciple of the Mahatma, donates, at his instance, Rs. 60,000 to the Visva-Bharati funds; the Delhi Municipality votes a civic address to the Poet, which is vetoed by Government; the citizens of Delhi hold a public reception at the Queens Garden, when an address of welcome is presented to him; Princess Niloufar of Hyderabad entertains him at a lunch; visits Meerut where the

Municipality and the District Board present him with addresses, returns to Santiniketan and marries his only grand-daughter Nandita Ganguly to Krishna Kripalani (April 25, 1936).

The Communal Award

PRESIDES (July 15) at a big meeting at the Town Hall to protest against the injustice done to Bengal Hindus under the Communal Award and signs the Hindu memorial to the British Premier against the Award; is criticised by a section of his countrymen for his being a signatory to a "petition", which is considered derogatory to his position—while another section holds that the Poet should not have mixed himself up with the communal wrangle, the Poet, however, bases his protest against the Communal Award on larger national grounds;

addresses at Bengal Women's Workers' Conference (Oct. 12)

Calcutta University Convocation

ON the 17th February, 1937 the Poet addresses the Convocation of the Calcutta University, the first non-official invited to speak at this academic function and to speak at it in Bengali; inaugurates the Bengali Literary Conference held at Chandernagore (Feb. 21); presides at the "Parliament of Religions" (March 3) convoked in connection with the Ramkrishna Centenary, the "Chinese Hall" of the Visva-Bharati is opened at Santiniketan by the Chinese Consul in Calcutta on the Bengali New Year's Day (14th April, 1937); the seventy-seventh birthday of the Poet is observed at Santiniketan (May 7, 1937); spends a month at Almora, engaged in

RABINDRANATH TAGORE



—In March, 1937 the Poet presided at the "Parliament of Religions" convened in connection with the Birth-Centenary of Ramkrishna Paramhansa. Seated left to right THE POET, Sir Francis Younghusband and Mrs Sarojini Naidu

PHOTO J. K. SANJAL

writing *Vishvapariksha*—an introduction to Science for Bengali readers, spends part of July at Patuara, his estate in North Bengal the title of *Kavisamrat* is conferred on him by Bharati-Tirtha of Andhra at a special convocation held on July 24, *Varshamangal* is staged in Calcutta (September 4 and 5); is taken seriously ill at Santiniketan on September 10, 1937, when his old friend and physician Sir Nilratan Sircar rushes to his bedside with a devoted band of doctors and brings him back to health, is brought to Calcutta (October) where Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose and others then attending an A. I. C. C. meeting (which adopts a resolution of thanksgiving on his recovery) come to see him, his life long friend Jagadish Chunder Bose passes away on Nov. 23, 1937, sends a message to the New Education Fellowship Conference in Calcutta in December, writes a number of poems during convalescence, which are later published as *Prantik* (At the End), Lord Lothian and later Lord and Lady Brougham visit Santiniketan January 1938

ON March 1, 1938 the Osmania University confers its Hon. D. Litt. degree on the Poet *in absentia*, on March 19, he attends the performance, in Calcutta, of *Chandalika* by the "Sangeet-bhawan" staff and students, meets Gandhiji in Calcutta on March 22, at Santiniketan, the Poet's 78th birth-day anniversary is observed for the first time not on May 7 but on April 14—the Bengali New Year's Day, spends the summer at Kalimpong and

Mangpoo, returning on July 5 to Santiniketan, writes a popular treatise on Bengali language *Bangla Vasa Parichaya*, the poems of *Senjuti* and dramatizes his story of *Mukter Upaya* (Means of Salvation), addresses the inmates of the Asram on Gandhiji's seventieth birthday, on the 9th December, Marquess of Zetland, Secretary of State for India, opens an exhibition of his paintings at the Calmann Gallery in London, Lady Linlithgow and her daughter visit the Poet at Santiniketan

'Hindi-Bhawan' Opened

ON January 21, 1939 Subhas Bose, then President of the Indian National Congress visits Santiniketan

and is accorded a public reception; on January 31 Jawaharlal Nehru opens "Hindi Bhawan" at Santiniketan, on February 2, comes Subhas Bose again and then, on the 6th, Rajendra Prasad, *Shyama* and *Chandalika* are produced in Calcutta by Santiniketan artistes, the Poet attending the performance, his seventy-ninth birth-day is observed at Santiniketan on the Bengali New Year's Day (April 14), invited by the Congress Government of Orissa, goes to Puri where his actual birth-day (May 7) is observed with great solemnity, spends the summer at Mungpoo and Kalimpong, performs, at the invitation of Subhas Chandra Bose, the opening ceremony of the "Mahajati Sadan" in Calcutta (Aug. 18) the next day Pandit Nehru visits the Poet at the Jorasanko house on his way to China, addresses on December 15 a meeting at the Corporation Health Museum in connection with the opening of a Food and Nutrition Exhibition, opens on December 16, 1939, the Vidyasagar Memorial Hall at Midnapore.

Gandhiji's Visit

GANDHIJI visits the Poet at Santiniketan (February 17-19, 1940), opens at Suri, the district headquarters of Birbhum (Feb. 21) the Industrial Exhibition held there annually in March, goes to Bankura to lay the foundation stone of a Maternity Home and Child Welfare Centre, on April 5, the Poet's most devoted friend C. F. Andrews (born 12th February, 1871) dies at a Nursing Home in Calcutta, on April 14 (Bengali New Year's Day) the Poet's 80th birth-day is quietly observed at



—At the invitation of the Poet, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru opened the 'Hindi-Bhawan' of the Visva-Bharati in January, 1939

PHOTO TARAK DAS

A CHRONICLE OF EIGHTY YEARS

—The Poet reading his address at the opening ceremony of the Vidyasagar Memorial Hall, which he performed at Midnapore in December, 1939

PHOTO UNIVERSAL ART GALLERY

Santiniketan,* spends the summer at Mungpoo

tember 19, is taken there seriously ill on September 27 and brought down to Calcutta on September 29, is placed here under the treatment of Dr B C Roy, assisted by others, they tide him over the period of acute illness and he is taken to Santiniketan on November 18 to convalesce after two months

Oxford comes to Visva-Bharati

OXFORD UNIVERSITY holds a special Convocation at Santiniketan on Aug 7, 1940, to confer on him a Doctorate of Literature, *honoris causa*.—Sir Maurice Gwyer, Chief Justice of India, Sir S Radhakrishnan and Mr Justice Henderson of the Calcutta High Court representing Oxford at the function†, leaves for Kalimpong on Sep-

*On this occasion, seated on a decorated dais, the Poet received felicitations and gave readings from his drama, 'The King of the Dark Chamber'

In a congratulatory message to the Poet, Marshal Chiang Kai-shek said: "In wishing you good health and long life I pray that you may be spared to humanity for many more years to come, so that you may spread over ever-widening areas of the world, the benign influence of your love of peace and fellowship and also propagate your noble ideas in the fields of education and culture. May you hold up a beacon light to this benighted and suffering world for ever and ever."

†William Rothenstein writes in his *Recollections*—

"Fox-strangways [the author of 'The Waste of Hindostan'] wanted Oxford or Cambridge to give Tagore an honorary degree (1912). Lord Curzon [then Chancellor of Oxford University], when consulted, said that there were more distinguished men in India than Tagore! I wondered who they were, and I regretted that England had left it to a foreign country to make the first emphatic acknowledgment of his contribution to literature."

in bed in Calcutta, receives Tai Chi-Tao, President of the Examination Yuan, National Government of China, on December 9, 1940, though confined to bed, the Poet's literary activity continues unabated,—the books published during the year being *Nava-Jalak* ('The New Born') *Sanai* ('The Pipe') *Chhele-bela* ('My Boyhood Days'), *Tim Sangi* (three short stories), *Roga-Sajjay* ('In Sick-bed') and *Arogya* ('Convalescence')

Eighty-first Birthday

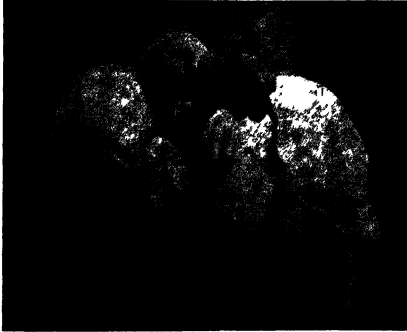
RABINDRANATH'S eighty-first birth-day is observed at Santiniketan on the 1st *Baisakh*, 1348 B E (the Bengali New Year's Day) corresponding to April 14, 1941, when he delivers a stirring address on *The Crisis in Civilisation*, which creates a profound impression all over India with its vigorous, bold and penetrating analysis of the causes of the ruin of "a proud civilization"—the civilization of Europe, on which he had once built his faith, the faith "that has gone bankrupt altogether to-day when I am about to quit the world"



—The Poet giving his blessings at the wedding of Nandini, a girl brought up from her infancy by his daughter-in-law, Mrs Rathindranath Tagore

PHOTO S BHANJA

RABINDRANATH TAGORE



-When the two met

COURTESY PHOTO S. SHARMA

THE POET COMPLETES HIS EIGHTIETH YEAR ON THE TWENTY-FIFTH BAISAKH, BHANGALI PRA 1348—MAY 8, 1941

THE EVENT IS CELEBRATED ALL OVER INDIA

The Maharaja of Jipperi confers on him the title of *Bhagat-Bhaskar* ('The Sun of India') two new books are published on his birthday—*Janmadine* (poems) and *Gulpa-Sulpa* ('Yarns') also 'My Boyhood Days' the English rendering of (*Chhelobala*)

Recurrent Illness

THE POET continues to be ill and is, more or less, confined to bed, unable to hold the pen with ease, he dictates his poems and other writings, on June 4, 1941 the Poet issues from his sick-bed a remarkable statement to the Press in reply to an open letter addressed to Indians by Miss Eleanor Rathbone, a member of Parliament, calling upon them to stand by Britain in the War, which he describes as an "impertinent challenge to our conscience", the statement creates a great sensation

THE LAST DAYS

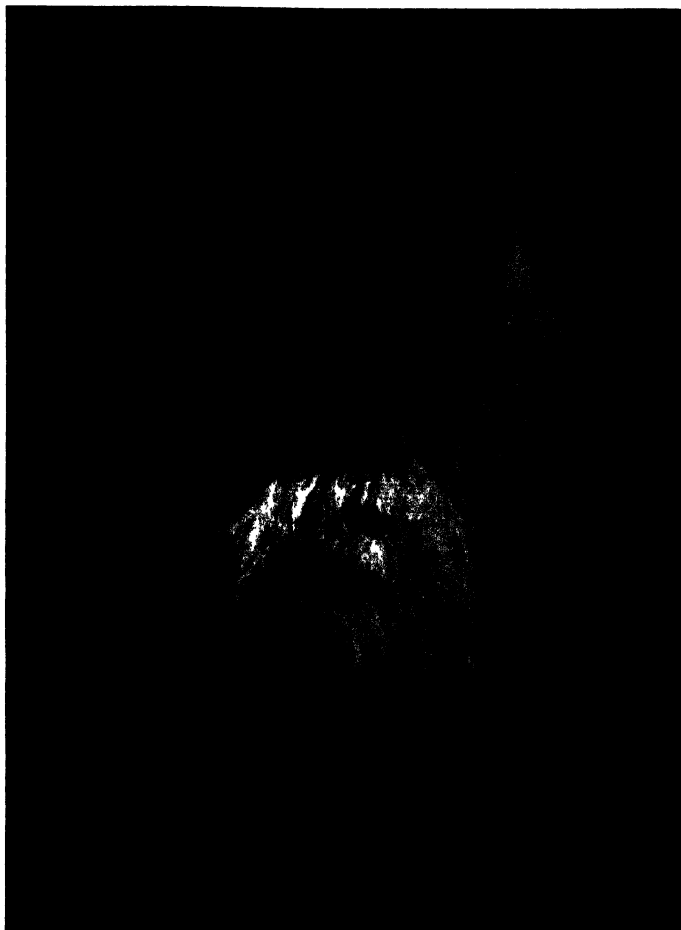
Brought to Calcutta

TOWARDS the end of June, 1941, the Poet who has never been able to recover from his illness in Septem-



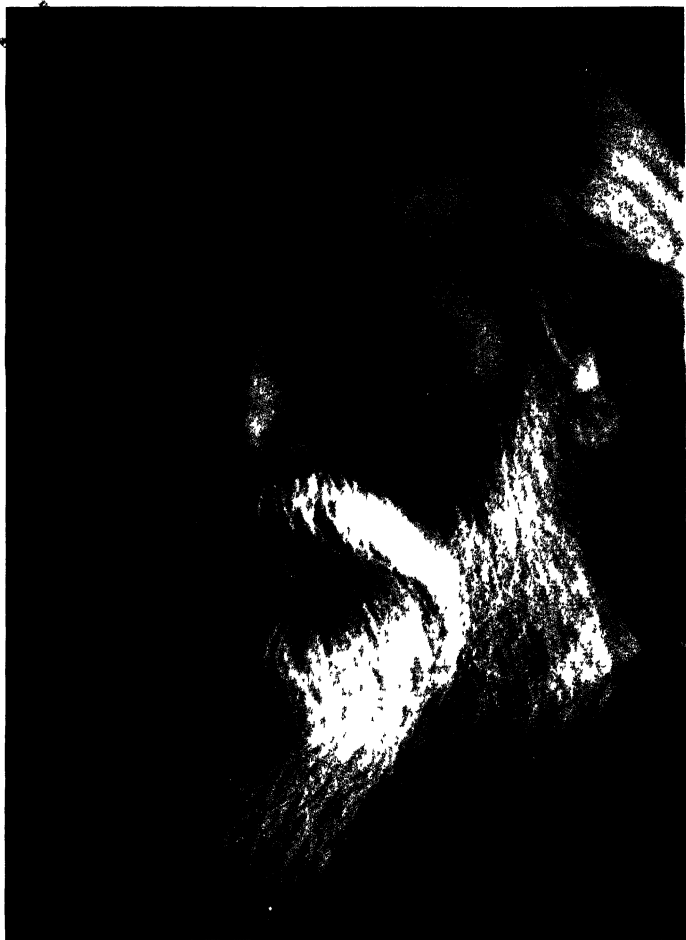
-RABINDRANATH WELCOMES GANDHIJI AND KASTURIBAI GANDHI AT SANTINIKETAN ON FEBRUARY 17, 1940

PHOTO S. SHARMA



1939

From a Photo taken
at Santiniketan



1941

From a Photo taken at
Santiniketan on Apr 14 1941

*With best wishes for
"The Calcutta Municipal Gazette"
Rabindranath Tagore*

Engraved & Printed by
Bharat Phototype Studio

By
S Shaha

ber 1940, when he was brought down from Kalimpong—has a serious setback, physical conditions begin steadily to decline causing anxiety, the doctors, who had attended on him previously, are summoned to Santiniketan, Dr B C Roy and Dr L M Banerjee examine him and advise removal to Calcutta *

THE POET is brought down to Calcutta in the afternoon of Friday, the 25th July, 1941, doctors examine him again and decide on a surgical operation, the operation is performed by Dr L M Banerjee in the morning of Wednesday, the 30th July immediately before the operation, at half-past nine, he dictates his last poem "তোমার পথের পথ" রেখা
আঁকি করি যিনি হলনাআলে, রে হলনাযদি
You have covered the path of your creation in a mesh of varied wiles, Thou Guileful One', his condition is declared to be satisfactory in a bulletin issued from his house the same afternoon, and in the evening when the doctors examine him again, "every thing was found to be in a satisfactory condition" †

Anxious Days

A BULLETIN issued at 8-15 P.M. on Friday, the 1st August, 1941, informs an anxious public that "the Poet passed a disturbed night and is feeling some uneasiness", the next day—Saturday the 2nd August—a somewhat reassuring bulletin is issued at 12 noon about the Poet having passed a quieter night",—it being added that his general condition shows improvement" the same night, however, his condition changes he passes a restless night though 'a slight improvement' is noticed on Sunday, the 3rd August, restlessness continues and he seems to have grown weaker" says a bulletin

* The doctors are stated (Vijaya-Bharati News August 1941) to have given their opinion that the nature of the infection could not easily be kept under control by medicine and there was always a chance of its flaring up any moment with serious consequences They felt confident that a simple operation would not only remove this danger but enable him to live a normal life for, perhaps, several more years

† The bulletin (dated Wednesday, the 30th July, 8-30 P.M.) further stated "He is in a cheerful mood and is occasionally exchanging a few words with his people" The bulletin added "The operation was considered necessary now as his troubles were gradually on the increase, and he was brought down to Calcutta, a few days ago, specifically for the purpose of this operation"

TAGORE'S REPLY TO MISS RATHBONE, M.P

'I have been deeply pained at Miss Rathbone's open letter to Indians I do not know who Miss Rathbone is, but I take it that she represents the mentality of the average 'well-intentioned' Britisher. Her letter is mainly addressed to Jawaharlal and I have no doubt that if that noble fighter of freedom's battle had not been gagged behind prison bars by Miss Rathbone's countrymen, he would have made a fitting and spirited reply to her gratuitous sermon His enforced silence makes it necessary for me to voice my protest even from my sick bed The lady has ill served the cause of her people by addressing so indirect, indeed impertinent, a challenge to our conscience She is scandalised at our ingratitude,—that having 'drunk deeply at the wells of English thought' we should still have some thought left for our poor country's interests

English thought, in so far as it is representative of the best traditions of Western enlightenment, has indeed taught us much, but let me add, that those of our countrymen who have profited by it have done so despite the official British attempts to ill-educate us We might have achieved introduction to Western learning through any other European language Have all the other peoples in the world waited for the British to bring them enlightenment? It is sheer insolent self-complacency on the part of our so-called English friends to assume that had they not taught us we would still have remained in the dark ages Through the official British channels of education in India have flowed to our children in schools not the best of English thought but its refuse, which has only deprived them of a wholesome repast at the table of their own culture

"Assuming however, that English language is the only channel left to us for enlightenment, all that 'drinking deeply at its wells' has come to is that in 1931, even after a couple of centuries of British administration, only about one per cent of the population was found to be literate in English,—while in the U.S.S.R. in 1932, after only fifteen years of Soviet administration, 98 per cent of the children were educated (these figures are taken from the Statesman's Year Book an English publication, not likely to err on the Russian side) But even more necessary than the so-called culture are the bare elementary needs of existence, on which alone can any superstructure of enlightenment rest

'And what have the British, who have held tight the purse-strings of our nation for more than two centuries and exploited its resources, done for our poor people? I look around and see famished bodies crying for bread I have seen women in villages dig up mud for a few drops of drinking water, for wells are even more scarce in Indian villages than schools

I know that the population of England itself is to-day in danger of starvation and I sympathise with them, but when I see how the whole might of the British navy is engaged in conveying food vessels to the English shores and when I recollect that I have seen our people perish of hunger and not even a cartload of rice brought to their door from the neighbouring district I cannot help contrasting the British at home with the British in India

Shall we then be grateful to the British, if not for keeping us fed, at least for preserving law and order?

I look around and see riots raging all over the country When scores of Indian lives are lost, our property looted, our women dishonoured the mighty British arms stir in no action, only the British voice is raised from overseas to chide us for unfitness to put our house in order

Examples are not wanting in history when even fully-armed warriors have shrunk before superior might and contingencies have arisen in the present war when even the bravest among the British French and Greek soldiers have had to evacuate the battlefield in Europe because they were overwhelmed by superior armaments but when our poor, unarmed and helpless peasants, encumbered with crying babes, flee from homes unable to protect them from armed goondas the British officials, perhaps smile in contempt at our cowardice!

'Every British civilian in England is armed to-day for protecting his hearth and home against the enemy, but in India even lathi-training was forbidden by decree Our people have been deliberately disarmed and emasculated in order to keep them perpetually cowed and at the mercy of their armed masters

'The British hate the Nairs for merely challenging their world-mastery and Miss Rathbone expects us to kiss the hand of her people in servility for having riveted chains on ours A Government must be judged not by the pretensions of its spokesman but by its actual and effective contribution to the well-being of the people

'It is not so much because the British are foreigners that they are unwelcome to us and have found no place in our hearts, as because, while pretending to be trustees of our welfare, they have betrayed the great trust and have sacrificed the happiness of millions in India to bloat the pockets of a few capitalists at home

'I should have thought that the decent Britisher would at least keep silent at these wrongs and be grateful to us for our inaction, but that he should add insult to injury and pour salt over our wounds, passes all bounds of decency"

[Replying to the Poet's letter from London on June 21, Miss Rathbone said "Writing as he says from the sick bed, I think he cannot fully have read my letter Otherwise he could not have completely ignored its main purposes and have merely repeated as my other hostile critics do, the old charges against British rule, which I was not concerned to defend]



"UTTARAYAN"
SANTINIKETAN, BENGAL

২৯।৫।৪১

কল্যাণীদেব,

অমল, তুমি আশ্চর্য করে দিয়েছ। তোমার
সংগৃহ প্রাচুর্য একেবারে অপ্রভেদী এবং অজলজলী। আমার
ক্লান্ত দেহে আমি ভাগ করে সমুচিত অনুভূতি করতে পারব
না। সুস্থ শরীরে যাদের তারাও বোধ হয় হাঁপিয়ে
উঠবে। এত বিচিত্র আমদানী ইজিল্বে তারা কোথায়ও
পায়নি। আমার বাগ্যানীলা থেকে আনতে করে অনুশীলা
পর্যন্ত যে সুশাকার পত্রিচয়ের সামগ্রী তুমি সাজিয়ে
তুলেছ সেগুলি পাঠকদের অঙ্কুর ছাপিয়ে গিয়েছে,
তারা তোমার জয়ধ্বনি করবে। আমার আশীর্বাদ গুলো
করো। ইতি

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর
স্বাক্ষরিত
২৯ মে ১৯৪১ খ্রিঃ
১৫ মে ১৯৪১ খ্রিঃ
১৫ মে ১৯৪১ খ্রিঃ
১৫ মে ১৯৪১ খ্রিঃ

প্রিয়তম অমলচন্দ্র হোষ।



Photo "Hindustan Standard"

—IN THE STREETS OF THE CITY OF HIS BIRTH

tin issued at 8.30 P.M. on Sunday - it being added at the same time that "though there are reasons for some anxiety, his condition, however, is not alarming", on Monday, the 4th August, the evening bulletin announces that the Poet "did not pass a very comfortable night", and "there has been a rise in the temperature since the afternoon".

ON TUESDAY, the 5th August, a bulletin issued at 8-10 P.M. says that "there has been some deterioration in the Poet's condition and there is cause for anxiety", inquiries made by the *Associated Press* at 2 A.M. on Wednesday the 6th August show "that there has been no improvement in the Poet's condition".

Grave Anxiety

THROUGHOUT Wednesday the 6th August, the bulletins are issued at frequent intervals, at 11-20 A.M. it is stated that "his weakness and restlessness is causing great anxiety" at 6 P.M. his condition has "worsened to some extent" at 7-30 P.M. it "has further worsened" at 8-30 P.M. his condition is causing grave anxiety throughout the day and far into the night constant telephone calls are received at the Poet's residence, and a continuous stream of callers make personal enquiries about his condition, at 11-30 P.M. his condition shows "no change".

The Last Hours

AT 2-30 A.M. on Thursday, the 7th August his condition "is causing greater anxiety", the last bulletin issued at 3-30 A.M. says that it has "slightly worsened since the last bulletin and is causing grave anxiety".

THE END

WITH morning friends and relations begin to gather at the Jorasanko house, the rooms overflow and a large crowd gathers outside the house prayers are offered at the unconscious Poet's bed-side and hymns sung, at about 10 Dr B. C. Roy and Dr L. M. Banerjee come and examine him for the last time.

AT THIRTEEN MINUTES PAST TWELVE ON THURSDAY, THE 7TH AUGUST, 1941 (corresponding to the 22nd *Sraban* Bengali Era 1348 and Saka Era 1863) THE POET BREATHES HIS LAST, AGED 80 YEARS 3 MONTHS IN HIS ANCESTRAL HOME IN CALCUTTA - 6 DWARKANATH TAGORE LANE - THE HOUSE WHERE HE WAS BORN ON TUESDAY MAY 7, 1861, BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 2.30 AND 3 A.M.

In the Majesty of Death

THE NEWS soon spreads all over the city and people of all ranks and station in life, gather at the Poet's house every section of the community is represented. A vast uncontrollable crowd fills the quadrangle and the courtyard thousands throng the streets, schools and colleges, courts and offices, markets and mercantile firms are immediately closed, flags fly half-mast on public buildings, hundreds of men and women, young and old, file past the room where the Poet lies robed in silk decked with flowers - beautiful in death as in life.

The Last Journey

THE FUNERAL procession starts at about 3-30 P.M., goes along Chitapore Road, Vivekananda Road, Chittaranjan Avenue and Colootola Street where men stand ten deep and the balconies and house-tops on either side are filled with women, flowers are showered, rose-water is sprinkled on

the bier as it proceeds with the precious burden, the procession arriving in College Street, in front of the Senate House, wreaths are offered by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of His Excellency the Chancellor, the University with its various departments, members of the Senate and Syndicate and many other academic bodies.

ANOTHER brief halt is made in front of the Prayer Hall of the Sadhuran Brahmo Samaj in Cornwallis Street, where prayers are offered and floral tributes placed on the bier on behalf of this religious body of which he was the only Honorary Member the procession then wends its way along Cornwallis Street, Grey Street, Baito Kisto Paul Avenue (Sovabazar) and Nantolla Ghat Street to the cremation grounds, thousands of people lining up both sides of the route showing flowers on the bier, the cortege reaches the Burning Ghat as the sun sets.

A LARGE and unmanageable crowd at Nantolla makes it difficult for the bier to be taken to the site specially selected for the cremation outside the enclosure, right on the bank of the Ganges, as the bier is placed on the ground there is a frenzied rush of people to touch it the rush is so great that it considerably delays the funeral.

The End of It All

THE cremation ceremony starts shortly after 8 P.M. and concludes at midnight, the last rites are performed as laid down in the *Anushthan Paddhati* (code of ceremonies) by the Poet's father, Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, the second great leader of the Brahmo Samaj, as the body is placed on the pyre, a hush falls on the vast concourse of people, while many touch the ground with their forehead in a gesture of reverence, the flames leap up, and so much beauty and fame, so much dignity and name are consumed in the cleansing fire whose glory the Poet had sung in one of his memorable and magnificent songs.

The ashes are collected in a silver urn and taken to Santumketan by the Poet's son the next morning.

"I shall be born in India again and again. With all her poverty, misery, and wretchedness, I love India best."

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

RABINDRANATH TAGORE



At the ceremony of the laying of the foundation stone of the "Mahajati Sadan" on August 18, 1939



—At the opening of Food & Nutrition Exhibition at the Corporation Health Museum on December 15, 1939

PHOTO : S. SHARMA

CRISIS IN CIVILIZATION

Tagore's Message on Completing His Eighty Years

TODAY I complete eighty years of my life. As I look back on the vast stretch of years that lie behind me and see in clear perspective the history of my early development, I am struck by the change that has taken place both in my own attitude and in the psychology of my countrymen—a change that carries within it a cause of profound tragedy.

Our direct contact with the larger world of men was linked up with the contemporary history of the English people whom we came to know in those earlier days. It was mainly through their mighty literature that we formed our ideas with regard to these newcomers to our Indian shores. In those days the type of learning that was served out to us was neither plentiful nor diverse, nor was the spirit of scientific enquiry very much in evidence. Thus their scope being strictly limited, the educated of those days had recourse to English language and literature. Their days and nights were eloquent with the stately declamations of Burke, with Macaulay's long-rolling sentences; discussions centred upon Shakespeare's drama and Byron's poetry and, above all, upon the large-hearted liberalism of the nineteenth-century English politics.

At the time though tentative attempts were being made to gain our national independence, at heart we had not lost faith in the generosity of the English race. This belief was so firmly rooted in the sentiments of our leaders as to lead them to hope that the victor would of his own grace pave the path of freedom for the vanquished. This belief was based upon the fact that England at the time provided a shelter to all those who had to flee from persecution in their own country. Political martyrs who had suffered for the honour of their people were accorded unreserved welcome at the hands of the English. I was impressed by this evidence of liberal humanity in the character of the English, and thus I was led to set them on the pedestal of my highest respect. This generosity in their national character had not yet been vitiated by Imperialist pride. About this time, as a boy in England, I had the opportunity of listening to the speeches of John

Bright, both in and outside Parliament. The large-hearted, radical liberalism of those speeches, overflowing all narrow national bounds, had made so deep an impression on my mind that something of it lingers even today, even in these days of graceless disillusionment.

Certainly that spirit of abject dependence upon the charity of our rulers was no matter for pride. What was remarkable, however, was the whole-hearted way in which we gave our recognition to human greatness even when it revealed itself in the foreigner. The best and noblest gifts of humanity cannot be the monopoly of a particular race or country; its scope may not be limited, nor may it be regarded as the miser's hoard buried underground. That is why English literature which nourished our minds in the past, does even now convey its deep resonance to the recesses of our heart.

Extracts from the address

THUS passed the first chapters of my life. Then came the parting of ways accompanied with a painful feeling of disillusion when I began increasingly to discover how easily those who accepted the highest truths of civilization disowned them with impunity whenever questions of national self-interest were involved.

There came a time when perforce I had to snatch myself away from the mere appreciation of literature. As I emerged into the stark light of bare facts, the sight of the dire poverty of the Indian masses rent my heart. Rudely shaken out of my dreams, I began to realise that perhaps in no other modern state was there such hopeless dearth of the most elementary needs of existence. And yet it was this country whose resources had fed for so long the wealth and magnificence of the British people. While I was lost in the contemplation of the great world of civilization, I could never have remotely imagined that the great ideals of humanity would end in such ruthless travesty. But today a glaring example of it stares me in the

face in the utter and contemptuous indifference of a so-called civilized race to the well-being of crores of Indian people.

That mastery over the machine, by which the British have consolidated their vast empire, has been kept a sealed book, to which due access has been denied to this helpless country. And all the time before our very eyes Japan has been transforming herself into a mighty and prosperous nation. I have seen with my own eyes the admirable use to which Japan has put in her own country the fruits of this progress. I have also been privileged to witness, while in Moscow, the unsparing energy with which Russia has tried to fight disease and illiteracy, and has succeeded in steadily liquidating ignorance and poverty, wiping off the humiliation from the face of a vast continent. Her civilization is free from all invidious distinctions between one class and another between one sect and another.

WHEN I see elsewhere some two hundred nationalities—which only a few years ago were at vastly different stages of development—marching ahead in peaceful progress and amity, and when I look about my own country and see a very highly evolved and intellectual people drifting into the disorder of barbarism, I cannot help contrasting the two systems of governments, one based on co-operation, the other on exploitation, which have made such contrary conditions possible.

Thus while these other countries were marching ahead, India, smothered under the dead weight of British administration, lay static in her utter helplessness. Another great and ancient civilization for whose recent tragic history the British cannot disclaim responsibility is China. To serve their own national profit the British first doped her people with opium and then appropriated a portion of her territory. As the world was about to forget the memory of this outrage, we were painfully surprised by another event. While Japan was quietly devouring North China, her act of wanton aggression was

ignored as a minor incident by the veterans of British diplomacy. We have also witnessed from this distance how actively the British statesmen acquiesced in the destruction of the Spanish Republic.

Such is the tragic tale of the gradual loss of my faith in the claims of the European nations to civilization. In India "the misfortune of being governed by a foreign race" is daily brought home to us not only in the callous neglect of such minimum necessities of life as adequate provision for food, clothing, educational and medical provision for the people, but in an even unhappier form in the way the people have been divided among themselves. The pity of it is that the blame is laid at the door of our own society. So frightful a culmination of the history of our people would never have been possible, but for the encouragement it has received from secret influences emanating from high places.

One cannot believe that Indians are in any way inferior to the Japanese in intellectual capacity. The most effective difference between these two eastern peoples is that whereas India lies at the mercy of the British, Japan has been spared the shadow of alien domination. We know what we have been deprived of. That which was truly best in their own civilizations, the upholding of the dignity of human relationship, has no place in the British administration of this country. If in its place they have established, with baton in hand, a reign of "law and order", in other words a policeman's rule, such mockery of civilization can claim no respect from us. It is the mission of civilization to bring unity among people and establish peace and harmony. But in unfortunate India the social fabric is being rent into shreds by unseemly outbursts of hooliganism daily growing in intensity right under the very aegis of "law and order". In India, so long as no personal injury is inflicted upon any member of the ruling race, this barbarism seems to be assured of perpetuity, making us ashamed to live under such an administration.

IN the meanwhile the demon of barbarity has given up all pretence and has emerged with un concealed fangs, ready to tear up humanity in an orgy of

devastation. From one end of the world to the other the poisonous fumes of hatred darken the atmosphere. The spirit of violence which perhaps lay dormant in the psychology of the West has at last housed itself and desecrates the spirit of Man.

THE wheels of Fate will some day compel the English to give up their Indian Empire. But what kind of India will they leave behind, what stark misery? When the stream of their centuries' administration runs dry at last, what a waste of mud and filth they will leave behind them! I had at one time believed that the springs of civilization would issue out of the heart of Europe. But today when I am about to quit the world that faith has gone bankrupt altogether.

As I look around I see the crumbling ruins of a proud civilization strewn like a vast heap of futility. And yet I shall not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in Man. I would rather look forward to the opening of a new chapter in his history after the cataclysm is over and the atmosphere rendered clean with the spirit of service and sacrifice. Perhaps that dawn will come from this horizon, from the East where the sun rises. A day will come when unvanquished Man will retrace his path of conquest, despite all barriers, to win back his lost human heritage.

Today we witness the perils which attend on the insolence of might; one day shall be borne out the full truth of what the sages have proclaimed:

By unrighteousness man prospers, gains what appears desirable, conquers enemies, but perishes at the root."



"Uttarayan"
Santiniketan, Bengal
19/11/33

Cities are organic expressions of culture. Until today our cities have grown up, as much of our exterior life has, chaotically. They have been imitation of Europe and their lives have flowed in channels which have been sometimes at tangent, sometimes parallel to our own. Now that India is slowly coming to her own our towns should mirror our national culture and artistic sensibility. I look forward to a Calcutta which will reflect this ideal.

Rabindranath Tagore

THE FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

"A Red Letter Day in Bengali Literature"

"A RED LETTER DAY in Bengali Literature"—that is how a contemporary newspaper, *Surendranath Banerjee's* famous daily, *THE BENGALER*, described the homage which Rabindranath's countrymen paid the Poet on his completing the fiftieth year of his life. The great ovation took place on January 28, 1912 at the historic Town Hall in Calcutta.

The initiative in according this reception was taken by Jagadis Chunder Bose, Prafulla Chandra Ray, Ramendra Sundar Trivedi, Sarada Charan Mitter, Hirendra Nath Datta, Asutosh Chaudhuri, Brajendra Kishore Rai Chaudhuri, Rai Yatindra Nath Chaudhuri and the Maharaja of Cossimbazar—Manindra Chandra Nundy. In a letter addressed to the public, the first draft of which—in the handwriting of Hirendra Nath Datta—is reproduced elsewhere in facsimile, they called upon their compatriots to do honour to the Poet in a fitting manner and to convey to him their appreciation of his work and worth on the occasion. With this object in view a Committee consisting of, among others, the Maharaja of Mourbhanj, the Maharaja of Nator, Sivanath Sastri, Brajendra Nath Seal, Ramananda Chatterjee, Chittaranjan Das, Satish Chandra Vidyabhusan, Akshoy Kumar Maitra, Priyanath Sen, Prabhat Kumar Mukherjee, Hemendra Prasad Ghose, Khagendra Nath Mitra, Jatindra Mohan Bagchi, Manilal Ganguli, Dwijendra Narayan Bagchi, Satyendra Nath Dutta, Charu Bandopadhyaya was formed, who, "thinking that it would be in the fitness of things that the BANGIYA SAHITYA PARISHAD should be in charge of the celebration, asked that body to undertake this public duty."

THE BANGIYA SAHITYA PARISHAD—the Academy of Bengali Letters, the premier literary body in Bengal—gladly took up the duty, and its Secretary, the Poet's life-long friend, Principal Ramendra Sundar Trivedi, assisted by a youthful band of the Poet's admirers, themselves well-known poets, novelists and short story-writers, threw themselves heart and soul in the work of organisation. Funds were raised and a Rabindra Fellowship Fund established, out of which it was proposed to give fellowships for Bengali translations from standard works in science, history, literature etc. in European languages and for original works in Bengali embodying the results of independent research on the part of the fellows, the selection of fellows and of works resting in the hands of the PARISHAD.

The principal function, the presentation of the address of felicitations, took place, as already stated, on Sunday, January 28, 1912. A report of the ceremony is reproduced below from *THE BENGALER* of Monday, January 29, 1912:

ON Sunday afternoon, at the instance of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, a meeting was held at the Town Hall, which marked a unique event in the history of Bengali Literature. Bengalis, young and old, men and women, professors and teachers, doctors and merchants, traders and shop-keepers, lawyers and journalists, students of colleges and schools, besides writers, authors and poets, every one of whom must owe his or her allegiance to the personage, whose great personality had inspired the sentiment that found audible expression and visible demonstration on the occasion, assembled in their thousands to congratulate our Poet Rabindranath on his having completed his fiftieth birthday. A demonstration which had no semblance or connection with matters, social or political, or religious, except that the congratulations had a religious aspects about it in the fact

that the outpourings of love and joy and gratitude towards the poet were all heavily leavened with a religious devotion to him; still the attendance was so large as would puzzle a frequent visitor to the Town Hall on demonstrative occasions, nay, the veriest meeting-hunter, as to how a meeting evidently of literateurs could be so well-attended. A journalist of old, say the late Pandit Dwarkanath Vidyabhusan, if he had chosen to descend in his ethereal form and have a look at the audience, would have been confused why shop-keepers, who in his days were either illiterate or would not read a Bengali book without much spelling, should be in a meeting like that, and, in spite of jostling and pushing and congesting to profuse perspiration, they should be waiting till the end. Really, the demonstration marked a new era. The litterateurs of the province are not to be



--From a photograph taken on the occasion of the Fiftieth Birthday Celebration in Calcutta on the steps of the Town Hall on January 28, 1912

First row (left to right) : Khagendra Nath Chatterjee, Byomkesh Mustafi, THE POET, Sarada Charan Mitter, Gurusdas Banerjee, Rakhaladas Banerjee
 Second row (left to right) : Ramendra Sunder Trivedi, Amulya Charan Vidyabhusan, Rai Yatindra Nath Chaudhuri, Satish Chandra Vidyabhusan, Chunilal Bose, Nagendra Nath Basu, Pramatha Nath Tarkabhushan
 Third row (central figure) : Hirendra Nath Datta

Courtesy. "Basumati"

counted now-a-days on fingers' end. Love of literature and of authors and poets, a strong love for the mother-tongue has penetrated the jute-mills, drapery shops, doctors' dispensaries, pundits' *tois*, even the green-grocers' stalls. So Rabindranath, the King among Bengali poets and authors, is surely the lord of his fellow-writers in the same way, as of those who have no pretence to being literary men. That the bright rays of the Sun (*Rabi*) still at his meridian of poetic genius, though considerably past the meridian physically, have enlightened fair creatures behind the *puṛda*, and he holds quite undisputed a sway over the fair sex as over the stern. His suzerainty over the former was evidenced by the large number of ladies attending the meeting and paying homage to the poet.

Amongst those present at the meeting were:—

The Maharajah of Natore, The Maharajah of Cossimbazar, The Maharajah of Susang, Sir Gooroodas Banerjee, Sir Pratul Chandra Chatterjee, The Hon'ble Mr. G. K. Gokhale, Mr Justice Woodroffe and Mrs. Woodroffe, Mr. Saroda Charan Mitter, Pandit and Mrs. Sivanath Sastri, Dr. and Mrs. Nilratan Sircar, Dr. P. C. Roy, Dr. and Mrs. J. C. Bose, Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal, Mr. & Mrs. Asutosh Chowdhuri, Mr. B. L. Mitter, Mr. Provas Chandra Mitter, The Hon'ble Dr. Deva Prasad Sarbadhikary, The Hon'ble Mr. Janaki Nath Bose, Mr. Brojendra Kisore Rai Chowdhuri, Rai Debendra Chunder Ghose Bahadur, Mr. and Mrs. S. R. Das, Mr. and Mrs. C. R. Das, Mr. and Mrs. Ramananda Chatterjee, Dr. and Mrs. P. K. Acharya, Sreematee Swarna Kumari Debi, Sreematee Prasannamoyee Debi, Sreematee Priyambada Debi, Mahamahopadhyaya Pramatha Nath Tarkabhushan, Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Satish Chandra Vidyabhusan, Mahamahopadhyaya Jadabeswar Tarkaratna, Principal Ramendra Sunder Tribedi, Pandit Sarat Chandra Sastri, Pandit Durga Charan Sankhatirtha, Pandit Vidhusekhar Sastri, Pandit Rajendra Nath Vidyabhusan, Dr. Protap Chandra Mazumdar, Rai Bepin Behari Gupta Bahadur, Mr. Nagendra Nath Chatterjee



কবিসম্বর্ধনা ।

কবির ত্রিযুক্ত রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর
 মহাশয়ের পঞ্চাশতম বর্ষ পূর্ণ হওয়া
 উপলক্ষে বঙ্গীয়-সাহিত্য-পরিষৎ
 কর্তৃক

তাহার সম্বর্ধনা ও অভিনন্দন ।

স্থান,—টউনহল, কলিকাতা ।

সময়—১৪ই শ্রাব ১৩১০,—২৮' ভাদ্রাবদী ১৩১২, রবিবার,
 অপরায় ৪ ঘটিকা ।

সভাপতি—শ্রীমত সারদাচরণ মিত্র, এম্ব. এ. বি.এস.।
 (বঙ্গীয়-সাহিত্য-পরিষদের সভাপতি)

নিবেশন—কবির সভাপাত্য করিবার পূর্বে অনুগ্রহ করি
 কেহ আসন পরিভ্রমণ করিবেন না ।



—Facsimile of the title page of the programme of the Town Hall meeting

(Missionary, S. B. Samaj and biographer of Rammohun), Mr. Loken Palit, I.C.S., Mr. Prithwis Chandra Roy, Mr. Gaganendra Nath Tagore, Mr. Abanindra Nath Tagore, Rai Bahadur Dr. Chuni Lal Bose, Mr. Hirendra Nath Datta, Mr. A. C. Dutt, Kumar Bahadur of Lalgola, Pandit Amulya Charan Vidyabhusan, Mr. J. N. Roy, Mr. Krishna Kumar Mitter, Dr. Sundari Mohan Das, Mr. Narendra Kumar Basu, Sreemati Sarala Debi Chowdhurani, Mr. and Mrs. P. K. Ray Choudhuri, Rai Yatindra Nath Chaudhuri, Dr. S. B. Mitra,

ROBINDRANATH THAKUR

RED LETTER DAY IN BENGALI LITERATURE

On Thursday afternoon, at the instigation of the Bangiya Parishad, a meeting was held at the Town Hall, which marked a unique event in the history of Bengali literature. Distinguished poets, teachers, doctors and men of letters and shopkeepers, lawyers and journalists, students of colleges and schools, Bengali writers—artists and poets, every one of whom must regard it as an all-glorious day in the history of Bengali literature, gathered there, the occasion being the fiftieth birthday of the great poet, Rabindranath Thakur.

A demonstration which had no aim of religious or political, or religious, but the demonstration had a religious and patriotic aim. It was a demonstration of the people's love for their great poet, Rabindranath Thakur, and a demonstration of the people's love for their country.

...the people's love for their country...

...the people's love for their country...



—The Poet with some of those whose untiring efforts made his Fiftieth Birthday (celebration in Calcutta a Red Letter Day in Bengali literature)

Seated (left to right) Karunanidhan Banerjee, poet, Jatindra Mohan Bagchi, poet, Sitvendranath Datta, poet
Standing (left to right) Charu Bandhopadhyaya, novelist and short story writer, Dwijendra Narayan Bagchi, poet; Manilal Ganguli, short story writer, Pravat Kumar Mukhopadhyaya, short story writer and novelist

Dushon Bagchi

Facsimile of the opening paragraph of the report in a Calcutta newspaper of the fiftieth birthday anniversary of the Poet celebrated at the Calcutta Town Hall on January 28, 1912 (from *The Bengali* (January 29, 1912))

Miss Sophia Qazi, Mrs. Avenger, Prof. Khagendra Nath Mitter, Mr. Kuntal Krishna Mitter and Mr. Pravat Kumar Mukhopadhyaya.

Mr. Sarada Charan Mitter, President, *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad*, who presided on the occasion, in a short neat speech, introduced the guest of the evening. He said that in ancient times poets were seldom honoured in their country. Blind Homer had to beg his bread, Dante was deported, Milton passed his days in misery. In England poets also shared the same fate. In India poets were never slighted. Unfortunately, they failed in their duty in the case of Hemchandra. In honouring Rabindranath they were honouring themselves.

Prof. Pandit Thakur Prosad Acharya read from the *Upanishads*, blessing the proceedings.

A choir of singers, under the leadership of Mr. Surendra Nath Bondopadhyaya, sang a song composed specially for the occasion by Mr. Jatindra Mohan Bagchi in praise of the poet.

The Maharaja of Natore in a well-written speech presented *arghya* to the Poet in a silver salver.

The President then garlanded Rabindranath and presented a gold lotus to him.

Sir Gooroodas Panerjee read a poem he had composed thirty years ago (1881) when he saw the Poet first on the stage in the role of Valmiki in his own play *Valmiki-Pratira*. The poem was as follows—

উঠ বঙ্কিম মাতঃ ঘুমায়ে থেকে। না আর
অজ্ঞান-তিমিরে তব স্বপ্নভাত হলো হের।
উঠেছে নবীন রবি, নব জগতের হবি,
নব "বাল্মীকি-প্রতিভা", দেখাইতে পুনর্বার।
হের তাকে প্রাণ ভরে, স্বপ্নভূষণ যাবে দূরে,
যুগিবে যেনে আশি, পাবে শাস্তি অনিবার।
'মহিময় ধূলিরাশি', খোঁজ যাহা দিবানিদি,
ওভাবে যজিলে যন, খুঁজিতে চাবে না আর।

Principal Ramendra Sundar Trivedi, Secretary of the *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad*, next presented the poet with a congratulatory address printed on ivory leaves, bound in the form of an antique Indian manuscript, enclosed in nice brocade cloth.

THE ADDRESS

Unto the lotus hands of the Great Poet

Rabindranath Tagore

When at the dawn of Bengal's national life the lotus opened at the touch of the sun's rays, the eternal Muse of India's genius stepped on that lotus and looked around. Then the horizon on every side was filled with gladness, the winds blew in joy, the guardian deities from the far ends of the sky showered blessings, in the zenith rolled the assuring voice of Rudra and the newly awakened hearts of seventy million men and women the stirrings of emotion felt. The poets of Bengal began to sing to new airs their songs of praise. Wise men were glad to place at her feet the wreaths they had woven with their own hands.

O, Great Poet, when on an auspicious day you first traced the lap of your Mother Bengal and came into touch with the earth and water of your Motherland, the waves of renaissance of Bengal broke upon your half-opened genius. At this impact your youthful mind was stirred, at that impulse your youthful hands began to cull fresh flowers to lay at the feet of the Muse. You were encouraged by the approving eyes of your predecessors, rewarded by the admiring glances of your followers and the light of the smile of Saraswati lighted up your forehead. Since then you have wandered at will through the jewelled chambers of the Temple of Learning, you have gathered fragments of the offerings laid at her feet and given freely to your brothers and sisters and they have been gratified by partaking of the joy thereof. The strains that continually arise from the touch of the Muse on the strings of the universal harp have reached your ears though you came after previous poets of the land. They have helped you to gather the drops of nectar out of the dust and distribute it to mankind—the nectar that poured over the earth while Gayatri in the guise of Suparna fetched it to heaven from the custody of the Gandharvas. For fifty years your motherland has nursed you in her lap with affection, and speaking on behalf of those who worship that enchantress of the world, the Sahitya Parisad of Bengal pray to the Father of the Universe for your long life.

Great Poet, may Sankara grant you victory.

THE POET'S REPLY

The Poet, in his usual musical voice, feelingly yet apparently unaffected by nervousness made a short but sententious reply. He said it would have been better if he could have resumed his seat, making obeisance to mother-country after receiving blessings from her. On the present occasion it was too much for him to give expression to his feelings. He was sure he would not be able to say much; he begged the pardon of his audience. His request was that they might see his feeling and intention through the few words he could speak. Verily, he had never had before such a serious ordeal to pass

***** অভিনন্দন *****

কবির শ্রীমত রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর মহাশয়

কবু.কমলেশ্বর

বাঙ্গালীর জাতীয় জীবনের নবাব্দায়তে নৃতন প্রভাতের অরুণ-কিরণ-পাতে যখন নবশতাব্দ বিকশিত হইল, ভারতের সনাতনী বাসুদেবতা তছুপরি চরণ অর্পণ করিয়া দিগন্তে দৃষ্টিপাত করিলেন। অমনি দিব্যধ্বনি প্রসন্ন হইলেন, মরুদগণ স্তম্বে প্রবাহিত হইলেন, বিশ্বদেবগণ অস্তুরিকে প্রসাদপুষ্প বর্ষণ করিলেন, উজ্জ্বল্যমে রুহদেবের অভয়ধ্বনি ঘোষিত হইল, নবপ্রবুদ্ধ শগুণকোটি নরনারীর হৃদয় মধ্যে ভাবধারা চঞ্চল হইল। বঙ্গের কবিগণ অপূর্ব স্বরলহরীর যোজনা করিয়া দেবীর বন্দনাগানে প্রবৃত্ত হইলেন; মনীষিগণ স্বহস্তাবচিত কুমোপহার তাঁহার শ্রীচরণে অর্পণ করিয়া কৃতার্থ হইলেন।

কবিবর, পঞ্চাশৎবর্ষ পূর্বে এক শুভদিনে হুমি যখন বঙ্গজননীকে অশোভা বর্জন করিয়া বাঙ্গালার মাটি ও বাঙ্গালার জলের সন্নিহিত নৃতন পরিচয় স্থাপন করিলে, বঙ্গের নবজীবনের হিল্লোল আসিয়া তখন তোমার অর্ধক্ষুণ্ট চেতনাকে তরঙ্গায়িত করিয়াছিল; সেই তরঙ্গ-ভিষাতে তোমার তরুণ জীবন স্পন্দিত হইল; সেই স্পন্দন-প্রেরণায় তোমার কিশোর হস্ত নব নব কুমুমসম্ভার চয়ন করিয়া বাণীর অর্চনায় প্রবৃত্ত হইল। তোমার পূর্বগামিগণের রিক্মনৈত্র তোমাকে বহুত করিল; অল্পগামিগণের মুক্মনৈত্র তোমাকে পুরস্কৃত করিল; বাগদেবতার শ্রোয়ন-নের শুভ জ্যোতি তোমার ললাটদেশে প্রতিফলিত হইল। তদবধি বাণীমন্দিরের মণিমণ্ডিত নানা প্রকোষ্ঠে হুমি বিচরণ করিয়াছি; রয়বেদির পুরোভাগ হইতে নৈবেদ্যকণ আহরণ করিয়া তোমার দেশবাসী ভ্রাতাভগিনীকে মুক্ত হস্তে বিতরণ করিয়াছি; তোমার ভ্রাতাভগিনী দেব-প্রাসাদের আনন্দ স্নান পান করিয়া ধ্বজ হইয়াছে। বীণাপাণির অঙ্গুলিপ্রেরণে বিশ্বযন্ত্রের তন্ত্রীসমূহে অনুলক্ষণ যে স্বর উঠিতেছে, ভারতের পুণ্যক্ষেত্রে তোমার অগ্রজাত কবিগণের পশ্চাতে আসিয়াও হুমি তাহা কর্ণকৃত করিয়াছি; স্বপ্নরূপিনী গায়ত্রী-কর্তৃক গন্ধর্ব্বরক্ষিত অমৃতরসের দেবলোকে নয়নকাল মস্তোপরি যে ধারাবর্ষণ হইয়াছিল, পৃথিবীর ধূলিরাশি হইতে নিষ্কাশিত করিয়া নর-লোকে সেই অমৃত-কণিকার বিতরণে তোমার সহকারিতা গ্রহণদ্বারা তাহা তোমায় কৃতার্থ করিয়াছেন। পঞ্চাশৎ সংবৎসর তোমাকে অস্ত্র-বাণিয়া তোমার শ্যামাজন্মদা তোমাকে স্নেহপীষে বর্জন করিয়াছেন; সেই ভুবনমোহনোন্মিত্রী উপাসনাপরায়ণ সন্তানগণের মুখস্বরূপ বঙ্গীয়-সাহিত্য-পরিষৎ বিশ্বপিতার নিকট তোমার শতাব্দুঃ কামনা করিতেছেন।

কবিবর, শঙ্কর তোমায় জয়যুক্ত করুন।

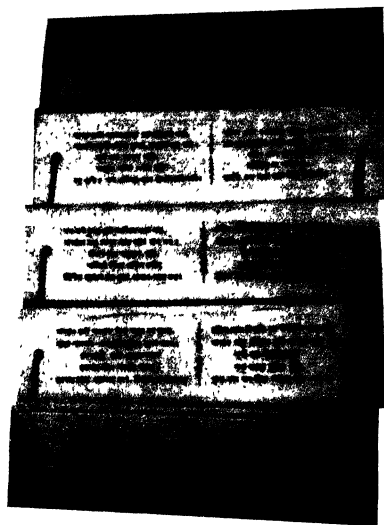
বঙ্গাব্দ ১৩১৩

১৪ মাস

বঙ্গীয়-সাহিত্য-পরিষদের পক্ষ হইতে

শ্রীরামেন্দ্রসুন্দর ত্রিবেদী

সম্পাদক



Courtesy: Rathindranath Tagore

Photo: D. Ratan

—This poem inscribed on ivory leaves was composed by the well-known Bengali poet, the late Satyendranath Datta, on the occasion of the fiftieth birthday celebration of Rabindranath Tagore and presented to him at an evening party given to the Poet by the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, the day after the function at the Town Hall, when it was read by the young poet

The opening stanza is given below:

জগৎ-কবি-সভায় মোরা তোষারি করি বর্ষ
বাঙালি আজি গানের রাজা, বাঙালি নহে বর্ষ।
দর্ভ তব আসন ধানি
অতুল বসি' লইবে মানি
হে ভূমী ! তব প্রতিজ্ঞা-জপে জগৎ-কবি সর্ব।

through. He felt that in face of such a great honour, his own littleness was made severely conspicuous. He never thought that his life-long worship of the Muse would result in such crowning glory. His heart was, therefore, in a state of hesitancy, brought face to face with the honour, which he must accept with a profound bow. To take such an honour, in the light it should be taken was very difficult. He had felt the difficulty from long ago. Still he could not refuse it. The speaker besought his hearers not to take his humility amiss, not to think it was false. He had only one word to say,—that was the only redeeming feature and that was the only solacing action to his agitated mind. It was this—all this honour was being done to the Muse of Bengali literature, the poet was merely the medium. The horizon of Bengali literature had hitherto been very narrow. The poor Muse had had to keep up her vitality, out of Princes' favours. But now the whole nation was welcoming her with open arms, as its own. A feeling of awakening was

universally visible, which was sure to render their people high-souled and large-hearted. This feeling, which had heretofore been confined to individuals alone, was general at the present time. This marked a new and happy era in the country. It was destined to vitalize the people. The poet chanced to be present before them when this flood had ebbed in. This is why he came in for the honour, purely as a matter of accident. To speak the truth, the honour was due to their feeling itself. The speaker was perfectly aware that it was not his due. The wreaths that they had put round his neck had virtually garlanded the Muse herself. His portion was only to bear the burden. The *pūja* was to the Muse. His charge was only to receive the offerings and forward them to her. Even this office was really one of great honour.

The ladies and some of the young men present, including a Mahomedan student of the Presidency College, made presents of flowers to the poet.

The meeting then closed amidst cheers.



“সেই সে বালক সেবিনকার
পঞ্চাশ ইল পার।
কাণ্ডটা কি চমৎকার !
চমৎকার না চমৎকার !

—The Poet's eldest brother, Dwijendranath Tagore on his youngest brother's sixty-sixth birthday.

SIXTIETH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

Bangiya Sahitya Parishad's Felicitations

The following address was presented to the Poet by Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Hara Prasad Sastri on behalf of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad on September 4, 1921 at a meeting in celebration of his sixtieth birth anniversary under the presidentship of Maharaja Jagadindranath Ray of Nator.

আশীর্বাদ

শ্রীমান্ রবীন্দ্রনাথ,

তুমি যখন নিভান্ত বালক, তখন হইতেই তোমার কবিতায় বাঙ্গালী মুগ্ধ। তোমার বত বয়োবৃদ্ধি হইতে লাগিল, ততই তোমার প্রতিভা বিকাশ হইতে লাগিল। সে প্রতিভা যেমন একদিকে দেশ হইতে দেশান্তরে ব্যাপ্ত হইতে লাগিল, তেমনি সাহিত্যেরও সকল যুগিৎ আয়ত্ত করিতে লাগিল। সে প্রতিভা প্রথম প্রথম কবিতায় আবদ্ধ ছিল, ক্রমে গল্প, নাটক, নবল-রচনা, ছোট গল্প, বড় গল্প, সমালোচনা, রাজনীতি, সমাজনীতি, কণ্ঠনীতি, এইরূপে সমস্ত সাহিত্য-সংসারে ছড়াইয়া পড়িল। তুমি সাহিত্যের যে যুগিৎই হাত দিয়াছ, তাহাকে উদ্ভাসিত ও সজীব করিয়া তুলিয়াছ। কারণ, তোমার প্রাণ আছে, সে প্রাণে যেমন মধুরতা আছে, তেমনি তেজ আছে—যেমন মোহিনী-শক্তি আছে, তেমনি উদ্ভাসিনী শক্তি আছে—যেমন হৃদ-দৃষ্টি আছে—তেমনি দূরদৃষ্টি আছে। তোমার প্রতিভা যেমন গড়িতে পারে, তেমনি ভাঙিতে পারে—যেমন মাতাইতে পারে—তেমনই ঠাণ্ডা করিতে পারে—যেমন কাঁদাইতে পারে তেমনি হাসাইতে পারে। কিম্বিকং, তোমার প্রতিভা সর্বতোমুখী, সর্বতঃপ্রসারী এবং সর্বতোমুখকারী। সজীবতার সহিত সাহিত্যের মিলনে তোমার হাতে উভয়ের পৌষ বৃদ্ধি হইয়াছে, তোমাকেও যশোমন্দিরের উচ্চ চূড়ায় তুলিয়া দিয়াছে।

ইংরাজ-রাজত্ব হইয়া অবধি তোমার পূর্ণপুঙ্খবগণ ধনে, মানে, বিদ্যায় বৃদ্ধিতে, সন্তুণ্ণে সাহসে বাঙ্গালার অতি উচ্চ আসন অধিকার করিয়া আসিতেছেন। তোমার প্রতিভায় সেই বংশের পৌষ বৃদ্ধি উজ্জ্বল হইতে উজ্জ্বলতর—উজ্জ্বলতম হইয়া উঠিয়াছে। তোমার গুণে বাঙ্গালা ত চিরদিনই মুগ্ধ—ভারত পৌষবাষিট, এখন পূর্বে ও পশ্চিমে, নূতন ও পুরাতন সকল মহাদেশই তোমার প্রতিভায় উদ্ভাসিত। আশীর্বাদ করি, তুমি দীর্ঘজীবী হইয়া সমস্ত পৃথিবী আরও উদ্ভাসিত কর। তোমার বংশই দীর্ঘজীবীর বংশ, তুমি শতাব্দ্য হও, সহস্রাব্দ হও। তোমার বয়স বতই পাকিতেছে, অভিজ্ঞতা বাড়িতেছে, ততই মাহুঘের ব্যাঘ্র তোমার মন গলিতেছে, তোমার বীণার স্বর্য্য গভীর হইতে গভীরতর হইতেছে। মানবের

মহলের জন্ত তোমার আকাঙ্ক্ষা ও আগ্রহ বতই বাড়িতেছে ততই তুমি ব্যাকুল হইয়া মঙ্গলময়ের মঙ্গল-সনের সশীপবর্তী হইতেছ। তোমার মঙ্গলবাসনা চরিতার্থ হউক, তোমার নাম অক্ষয় হউক, তুমি অবয়ব হইয়া ভারতের মঙ্গলকামনা করিতে থাক। তুমি নিমি-জ্ঞ করিয়া, বাঙ্গালার মুখ উজ্জ্বল করিয়া, আবার সোনার বাঙ্গালার কিরিয়া আসিয়াছ; তুমি আমাদের ভক্তি, প্রীতি, শ্রদ্ধা, ও ঘেহের উপহার-বরুণ এই পুষ্পমালা গ্রহণ কর। বিধাতার সৃষ্টিতে বাহা কিছু হৃদয়, বাহা কিছু হৃদয়, সব এই পুষ্পেই আছে। আমাদেরও বাহা কিছু হৃদয়, বাহা কিছু হৃদয়, তাহা তোমাতেই আছে। আইস, উভয়ের মিলন করিয়া দিয়া আমরা কৃতার্থ হই। ইতি

শ্রীহরপ্রসাদ সাস্ত্রী

বকীয়-সাহিত্য-পরিষদের সভাপতি

BLESSINGS

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

SRIMAN RABINDRANATH,

The people of Bengal have loved your poetry ever since you were a boy. As you grew up your genius flowered. That genius not only spread from country to country, it embraced every known form of literature. It was in the beginning confined to poetry but it soon expressed itself in prose, drama, novels, short stories, longer stories, criticism, politics, sociology and economics. Whatever form of literature you have touched with your magic hands, you have enriched and glorified. For you have a soul—a soul filled alike with sweetness and power, with fascination and compelling force, with minute insight and large vision. Your genius can both build and destroy, can madden as well as quell, can draw both tears and laughter. In short, your genius is many-sided, spread over everything and pleasing to all. In fusing literature to song you have enriched both and have yourself attained to the highest pinnacle of the Temple of Fame.

From the beginning of British rule your ancestors occupied a conspicuous place in Bengal in the matter of wealth, fame, learning, culture, courage and other virtues. Your own genius has illuminated that family glory to the highest degree. Bengal has always been charmed with your virtues and India filled with glory. And to-day East and West, the new world and the old are ablaze with your genius. I pray that you may live long to further illumine the world. Your family is long-lived—may you live to be a hundred, a thousand. With your age, your experience is growing every day, your mind is filling with pain at the sight of human suffering, the strains of your music are acquiring a deeper resonance. The more anxious you are growing for the welfare of mankind, the more yearningly are you approaching the throne of the All-Merciful. May your solicitude be rewarded, may your name live for ever, may you continue to strive for the welfare of India. You have returned to this golden land after conquering the Earth and enhancing the fame of Bengal. Please accept this garland of flowers as a token of our regard, affection, reverence and love. Everything in divine creation that is beautiful and fragrant is mirrored in these flowers. You also are the image of all that is beautiful and fragrant in us. Come let us blend the two and be blessed.

SRI HARAPRASAD SASTRI,
President, Bangiya Sahitya Parishad

RABINDRA-JAYANTI

SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

[COMPILED BY SUSIL KUMAR BANERJEE]

RABINDRANATH TAGORE completed the seventieth year of his life on the 8th May, 1931, and Bengal, and along with it India, seized upon the occasion to celebrate it, in such a manner as not only to enable the nation to have an opportunity of paying its tribute of love and respect to the Poet but also to acquaint it, as far as it was possible, with his services and achievements. A public meeting—convened by the leading citizens of Calcutta representing all sections of the community—was held on the 16th May, 1931 in the Calcutta University Institute Hall, under the presidency of the late Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Haraprasad Sastri, President, BANGIYA SAHITYA PARISHAD, when a committee was formed for the purpose with Sir J. C. Bose as President.* The celebration which took the form of a festival lasted for twelve days commencing on the 25th December, 1931 and ending on the 5th January, 1932.

The Town Hall and the Town Hall grounds were the venue of the principal functions of the festival. There were literary conferences, music festival, dramatic performances, folk songs and folk dances, an arts and crafts exhibition and a 'mela' (fair) attended by thousands every day. But by far the most important and most solemn of all the functions was the ceremony held in front of the Town Hall on Sunday, the 27th December, 1931, for the presentation of Civic and other addresses of felicitations to the Poet.

The entire space between the steps of the Town Hall and the Council House was decorated with flowers and foliage. Facing the steps on the farthest end was erected a high platform with a simple canopy hung over it. In the centre of the platform was placed the seat for the Poet. An amplifying apparatus broadcast every word uttered from the 'dais' to every member of the vast audience, no less than five thousand in number.

The gathering was unique. There was His Highness the Maharaja of Tripura, who opened the RABINDRA-JAYANTI Mela and Exhibition. There were the City Fathers headed by the Mayor, Dr. B. C. Roy. There were distinguished men of letters, scientists, artists, scholars, lawyers, engineers, doctors, journalists, students, teachers and professors, merchants, tradesmen and landlords. There were Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, Christians and Muslims, and there were Europeans, Americans, Mahatmas, Panjabis, Sindhis, Madrasis, Oriyas, Beharis, and Marwaris. Delegates from different Universities in India and representatives of various learned and literary bodies from different parts of the country invested the function with an all-India character. The presence of Dr. William E. Hocking, Professor of Philosophy at Harvard University, who expressed felicitations on behalf of the American people, and of the Consuls of many European countries lent an international aspect to the gathering.

The Nation's Homage In 1931

The Mayor, Dr. B. C. Roy, on behalf of the citizens of Calcutta and Mrs. Kamini Ray, the most distinguished of the living Bengalee poetesses, on behalf of the RABINDRA-JAYANTI PARISHAD (Tagore Septuagenary Celebrations Committee), received the Poet inside the Town Hall and conducted him

through the picture-galleries of the Art Exhibition in the ground floor, down the outer steps, over the cloth-covered pathway to the platform whereon he took his seat amid the blowing of conchshells, burning of incense, fragrance of flowers and reverential silence of the great assemblage, which stood up

* The Committee was a most representative one. The Vice-Presidents were: Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Hara Prasad Sastri, Mrs. Kamini Roy, Mr. Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, Sir P. C. Ray, Dr. B. C. Roy, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Sir C. V. Raman, Sir R. N. Mookerjee, Rev. Dr. W. S. Urquhart, Sir Nilratan Sircar, Sir Deva Prasad Sarbadhikary, Mr. G. D. Birla, Mr. Subhas Bose, Sir Hasan

Suhrawardy, Sir Charu Chandra Ghose, Sir N. N. Sircar, Mr. Ratnananda Chatterjee, Mr. Manmatha Nath Mukherji, Maharaja Sri Chandra Nandy and Mr. J. M. Sen-Gupta.

Mr. Hirendra Nath Dutta acted as Treasurer; Mr. Jatindra Nath Basu was General Secretary. Mr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee and Mr. Amal Home worked as Joint Secretaries, the burden of planning and organizing the celebration falling almost entirely on the latter.—Compiler.



—On the 27th December, 1931, before an assemblage of several thousands of people representing all sections of the community gathered in front of the Town Hall, where, on the street, facing the steps of the historic building, against the North gates of the Bengal Legislative Council House, a dais had been erected, the Poet was presented with addresses of felicitations by the Corporation of Calcutta, the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, the Prabasi Banga Sahitya Sammelan and the RABINDRA-JAYANTI PARISHAD (the Tagore Septuagenary (celebrations Committee))—Dr B C Roy is here seen reciting the Civic Address on behalf of the Calcutta Corporation

Photo: Kanchan Mukherjee

in a body as he came in view. Two girls remained standing with *chamar* in hand on two sides of the Poet's chair. It looked like a coronation ceremony.

The Mayor of Calcutta garlanded the Poet and read the civic address presented by the Corporation. The address was inscribed on a silver plate attached to a golden inkstand in the shape of a lotus, on which was placed a golden pen.

The Poet's famous national song *Jana-gana-mana-adhinayaka* (Victory to the Dispenser of India's Destiny!) was then sung in chorus; the Poet himself and the entire assemblage remained standing while the song was sung.

Mr. Amal Home, Joint Secretary of the RABINDRA-JAYANTI Committee, read a message of felicitations from Sir J. C. Bose, who could not be present owing to illness, followed by greetings from the King of Siam, the Shah of Persia, the Imperial University of Tokio and others from different parts of the world. Sir J. C. Bose's message ran thus:—

সিঁরিষি,

২৭শে ডিসেম্বর. ১৯৩১

বন্ধ—

তুমি অর্য্যুত হও।

ঐক্যদীপন বন্ধ

After this, Pandit Vidhusekhar Sastri of Santiniketan, on behalf of the RABINDRA-JAYANTI Committee, offered the Poet the *arghya* of sandal paste,

a burning earthen lamp, fragrant incense, a garland of flowers, a conchshell filled with water, a bouquet of flowers and green blades. In asking the Poet to accept this *arghya*, the Pandit chanted appropriate Sanskrit mantras, explaining the significance of these offerings, which symbolised the different qualities with which the Poet is endowed. These offerings were carried to the Poet in silver trays by some girls of the Santiniketan Asram. Smilingly the Poet touched them.

This picturesque ceremony over, Sir P. C. Ray garlanded the Poet and presented an address on behalf of the *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad*. Garlands and addresses also were presented by Pandit Ambika Prasad Bajpaye on behalf of the *Hindi Sahitya Sammelan*, by Sreemati Pratiba Devi on behalf of the *Prabasi Banga Sahitya Sammelan*.

Mrs. Kamini Roy read the address on behalf of the RABINDRA-JAYANTI Committee in the absence of the Committee's President, Sir J. C. Bose.

The address was inscribed in enamel on three goldleaves in the shape of a *punthi* (ancient Sanskrit manuscript book). The leaves were also decorated in enamel after designs drawn by the great artist Mr. Nandalal Bose.

There was a touch of pathos in the Poet's reply to the address of the RABINDRA-JAYANTI Committee when he uttered the words of farewell to his countrymen. Many were visibly moved.

Dr. Hocking of Harvard expressed felicitations on behalf of the American people.

রবীন্দ্র-জন্মতি

সমিতির নিবেদন -

অন্য ২৬শে বৈশাখ ১৩৩৮ (সুক্রবার, ৮ই মে ১৯৩১)
কবিবর রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর মহামায়ের বয়ঃকল্প সপ্ততি বঙ্গের
পূর্ণ হয়েন। আমরা মনে করি যে, এই শুভযতনে উপলব্ধ করিয়া,
সমগ্র দেশবাসীর পক্ষ হইতে, কলিকাতা নগরীতে তাঁহার যথোচিত
সম্বর্জন্য এবং একটি আনন্দোৎসবের আয়োজন করা কর্তব্য।

এ সম্বর্জন্য ও তাঁহার আত্মশ্রমিক উৎসব-আয়োজনাদির
ব্যবস্থা করিবার জন্য, আমরা ২৮ জুলাই ১৩৩৮ (শনিবার,
১৬ই মে ১৯৩১), সন্ধ্যা ছয় ঘটিকার সময়, কলিকাতা
ইউনিভার্সিটি ইনস্টিটিউটে গৃহে একটি পরামর্শ-সভার
আয়োজন হইতে।

এই সভায় আপনার উপস্থিতি ও যোগদান প্রার্থনীয়।
ইতি। কলিকাতা, ২৬শে বৈশাখ ১৩৩৮ ॥

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Calcutta.

শ্রী প্রিয়ম্বদা মল্লিক

শ্রী মুখেশ নাথ সরকার

শ্রী সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ বসু

W. S. Bhattacharya.

J. R. Banerjee
(শ্রী জগদীশ চন্দ্র বসু)

শ্রী (চ. চন্দ্র বসু)

শ্রী সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ বসু

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(শ্রী সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ বসু)

FASCISIMILE OF THE LETTER CONVENING THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF
RABINDRA-JAYANTI—TAGORE SEPTUAGENARY—IN CALCUTTA
ON MAY 16, 1931

The letter, which is dated 25th Baisakh, 1338 (Friday, May 8, 1931) was signed by :

First Page (Col. 1) :—Jagadish Chandra Bose, Prafulla Chandra Ray, Ramananda Chatterjee, Rajendra Nath Mookerjee, Kamini Roy, Jatindra Mohan Sen-Gupta, Basanti Debi, Abala Bose (Lady J. C. Bose), Sarala Roy (Mrs. P. K. Roy), Niranjan Sircar, Pramathanath Roy Chowdhury, Abul Kalam Azad, Ghanasyamdas Birla, Brajendranath Seal, Krishna Kamal Bhattacharyya. (Col. 2) :—Haraprasad Shastri, C. V. Raman, Hassan Suhrawardy, Sarat Chandra Chatterji, Bidhan Chandra Roy, Mohammad Akram Khan, Pramathanath Chaudhuri ("Birbal"), Hirendranath Datta, Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, Bipin Chandra Pal, Charu Chandra Ghose, Surendranath Mallik, Jatindranath Basu, Subhas Chandra Bose, Durga Charan Sankhya-Vedantatirth, Kriahna Kumar Mitra. (Col. 3) :—Reshee Case Law.

Second Page (Col. 1) :—Foss Calcutta (The Metropolitan), Deva Prasad Sarvadhikary, Sris Chandra Nundy, W. S. Urquhart, J. R. Banerjee, Heramba Chandra Maity, A. K. Fazlul Haq, H. A. Gidney, Nagendranath Basu, Dines Chandra Sen, Jaladhar Sen, Mujibar Rahman, Nares Chandra Sen-Gupta, Anandji Haridas, Surendranath Das-Gupta, A. Moore (Arthur Moore), E. C. Benthall, Sarojini Debi (Mrs. K. C. De), Onkar Mull Jetia. (Col. 2) :—Nripendranath Sircar, S. Khuda Buksh, Harinarayan Goenka, Ordhendro Coomarr Ganguly (O. C. Ganguly), Padamraj Jain, Jahangir Coyajee, Sivananda (President, Ramkrishna Mission).

The letter, drafted by Anil Home, organizer of the "Jayanti", is in the handwriting of Rajeshekar Bose ("Parasuram").

A book entitled the "Golden Book of Tagore", sponsored by Mahatma Gandhi, Sir J. C. Bose, M. Romain Rolland, Prof. Einstein and Costis Palamas (the Greek Poet) containing contributions from poets, authors, artists and scholars from thirty different countries of the world was presented to the Poet by Mr Ramananda Chatterjee, who had edited the Book, on behalf of the Publication Committee. Over two hundred leading writers and thinkers of the East and the West had contributed to this work, which would remain for years to come as a most remarkable document of international fellowship and the focussing point of world opinion on India and Indians.

Mr Kshiti Mohan Sen of Santiniketan presented a Bengali book, entitled *Jayanti Utsava*, containing contributions from Bengali poets, litterateurs and scholars dealing with the different aspects of the Poets' contribution to Bengali literature.

The Poet replied to all the addresses separately in Bengali except to the address of the *Hindi Sahitya Sammelan*, to which he replied in Hindi.

The function ended with the singing of the Poet's *Rakhi-song*, *Banglar Mati*, *Banglar Jal*.

On the 31st December, the students of Calcutta assembled at Senate House, presented the Poet with an address of felicitations read by a student of the Post-Graduate classes, Mr. Menovendra Nath Banerjee, who acted as President of the Students' Committee.

On the 2nd January, 1932, the Indian Society of Oriental Arts presented the Poet with an address at the Jorasanko House. A song composed specially by the Poet was sung on the occasion.

Addresses of Felicitations

কলিকাতার নাগরিকবর্গের অভিনন্দন

ঈশ্বর রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর মহাশয়ের করকমলে—

বিশ্বযোগ্য মহাশয়,

তোমার জীবনের সমুত্তম পুসিমাণ্ডি উপলক্ষে কলিকাতা নগরীর শৌর্যদের পক্ষ হইতে আমরা তোমাকে অভিবাদন করিতেছি।

এই মহানগরী তোমার জন্মভূমি এবং তোমার যে কবিত্রিভূমি সমগ্র সভ্য-জগতকে মুগ্ধ করিয়াছে এই স্থানেই তাহার প্রথম দূরদূর। এই মহানগরীই তোমার ধর্মিকুল জনকের ধর্মজীবনের সাধনক্ষেত্র, এই মহানগরীই তোমার পরিশ্রমের পিতামহের আশীষের কর্ণক্ষেত্র এবং এই মহানগরীর বে-শেষ ভাবে, ভাষায়, শিল্পে, সাহিত্যে, নর্দীতে, ঐতিহ্যে প্রভৃতি অর্জন করিয়াছে, তুমি সেই বসন্তের অকৃতজ্ঞ নয়—তাই তুমি স-এ বিশ্বের হইলো আমাদের একান্ত আশনার জন। বিশ্বের বিশ্বজনমানুষের সমগ্র লাভ করিয়া তুমি কলিকাতা-বাসীরাই যুগ উজ্জ্বল করিয়াছ। তোমার স্বকতোদ্রবী প্রতিভা বহুভাষাকে অসুখি বৈভবে সজিত করিয়া জগতের সাহিত্যক্ষেত্রে হুপ্রতিষ্ঠিত করিয়াছে, তোমার অভিনব কল্পনাশ্রুত শিল্পের আশ্রয় বাহুল্যের এক বিকৃত গরীকে বিশ্বমানবের শিক্ষাক্ষেত্রে পরিণত করিয়াছে, এবং তোমার লেখকান্বিত অনুভবায় বাঙ্গালী জাতির প্রাণে সুপ্রাণের দেশভাবোৎসাহ সঞ্চিত করিয়াছে। যে বাঙালীর প্রাণম পুরোচিত, যে বঙ্গ-ভারতীর দ্বিধাক্ষী সন্ধান, যে জাতীয় জীবনের জ্ঞানভূমি, আমরা তোমাকে অগ্নি প্রদান করিতেছি, তুমি গ্রহণ কর। বশে নাভয়ন।

তোমার ভগবর্জিত

কলিকাতা কর্পোরেশনের নরতসুন্দর পক্ষ
ঐতিহ্যবাহী রায়, দেবের।

THE CIVIC ADDRESS

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

World-Honoured Sir,

We have brought you the greetings of the Citizens of Calcutta at the termination of the seventieth year of your life.

You were born in this great city; and it was this city which saw the first blossoming of your creative genius which has enthralled the entire civilised world. Here it was that the life of piety and action, which made our people regard your noble father as a Rishi (sage), lived. It was here too



—Arriving at the Town Hall on December 27, 1931, accompanied by the poetess Kamini Roy, to receive the addresses of felicitations in connection with the RABINDRA-JAYANTI (Tagore Septuagenary)

that your princely grandfather found the field of his life's work. Here, indeed, is the home of that illustrious clan which has earned the esteem of all, by its high standard of conduct and social virtues, which has enriched thought, art and literature, and of which you are the brightest jewel. Therefore, while all the world acclaim you and claims you, we regard you as our very own. The citizens of Calcutta feel honoured by the recognition you have received in the world of learning.

Your universal genius has endowed the Bengali language with an amazing richness and has secured for it a place of

honour among the great litterateurs of the world. Out of your ideals has sprung up, in a little village of Bengal, an international resort for the development of a universal culture. Words which have flown from your immortal pen have revived the dying national consciousness of Bengal. You are the high priest in the worship of the Motherland; you, who have won for the genius of Bengal world-wide recognition, are the guide and preceptor of our national life, pray, accept the offering of our devotion which we have brought to you to-day.

"Bande Mataram"

On behalf of the Aldermen and Councillors
of the Corporation of Calcutta.

B. C. ROY,

Mayor.

কবির উত্তর

একটা কবির অভিনন্দন হাজার কর্তব্য বলিয়া গণ্য হইত। তাঁহার্য্য আপন হাদ্রবহিমা উজ্জল করিবার জন্তই কবিকে সমাদর করিতেছেন—জানিতেন সাম্রাজ্য চিরস্থায়ী নয়, কবিত্বশীল তাহাকে অতিক্রম করিবার ভারীকালে এসংস্থিত।

আজ ভারতের হাদ্রবহিমা বশের গুণিজন অধ্যাত—হাজার ভাব্য কবির ভাব্য পৌরষের মিল ঘটে নাই। আজ পুরসভা বশেরের নামে কবিসম্মানের ভার লইয়াছেন। এই সম্মান কেবল বাহিরে আমাকে অলঙ্কৃত করিল না, অগ্নের আদার হৃদয়কে আনন্দে অভিভূত করিল।

এই পুরসভা আমার জন্মদগরীকে জায়ে, জায়েগো, জায়েগো চরিতার্থ করুক; ইহার প্রভুত্বের চিত্রে, হাদ্রবহিমা, গীতকলায়, শিল্পে এখানকার দোকানদার নবিত হউক; সর্বপ্রকার মলিনতার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে অশিক্ষার কলঙ্ক এই দগরী জ্বলন করিয়া দিক,—পুরবাসীদের সেবে শক্তি অঙ্ক, গৃহে অন্ন, মনে উত্তর, শৈশবকাল্যাপাশে আনন্দিত উৎসাহ। হাদ্রবহিমা বশের বিবাক জায়েগো পাশ ইহাকে কদুচিত না করুক—তত্ত্ববুদ্ধি ছাড়া এখানকার সকল জাতি নকল বশসম্রাজ্যের সম্মিলিত হইয়া এই দগরী চরিত্রকে অমলিন ও শাশ্বতকে অবিচলিত করিবার হাদ্রবহিমা এই জাতি কামনা করি।

THE POET'S REPLY

In former times, it was considered the duty of kings to honour poets. They honoured poets just to heighten the glory of their own kingship. For, they knew kingdoms were not ever-lasting but the fame of poets outlived them and extended far into unborn ages.

In these times, the men of genius of the country have no place in the Court of the King of India. The king's language and the poet's language have not met in honourable friendship. To-day, the civic body has taken upon itself the duty of honouring the poet in the name of the country. This honour is not only an external ornament which has adorned me but has filled my heart with great delight.

Let this Corporation make the city of my birth great in the amenities of life, health and sanitation, and dignity and self-respect. Let painting, sculpture, music and arts grow under its auspices and make the dwellings of the citizens abodes of joy. Let this city wipe out its blot of illiteracy with all its dirt and uncleanness; let her citizens enjoy plenty, have strength of body and energy of mind, and be inspired with civic spirit born of joy; let not the poison of internecine strife pollute her life; let her citizens of all races

and all sects and communities unite in goodwill and keep her fair name untarnished and her peace undisturbed—this is my prayer.

বঙ্গীয়-সাহিত্য-পরিষদের অভিনন্দন

। প্রিঃ ।

রবীন্দ্র-প্রশস্তি

হে রবীন্দ্র,

বঙ্গদেশের সাহিত্যসেবী ও সাহিত্যমুদ্রাঙ্গীকরণের প্রতিনিবরণে বঙ্গীয়-সাহিত্য-পরিষৎ ভবনীর সন্তুষ্টিতম অঙ্গতিবি উপলক্ষে, সায়ের ও সঙ্গোপনে আপনাকে বরণ করিতেছে।

কিশোর বয়সেই আপনি বঙ্গবাণীর অর্জুন্য আয়নিয়োগ করেন। ভ্রমবহি ব্রতধারী ভগবীর তার, মুক্তিকাল নিয়ম ও নিষ্ঠার সহিত অজ্ঞাত-অকৃত্য ভাবে তাঁহার জায়েগো করিয়াছেন। হে ভাস্কর, আপনাদি সাধনায় সিদ্ধি হইয়াছে—সেবী আপনাদি শিরে অবর-বর বরণ করিয়াছেন—আপনাদি ত্রিতত্ত্বভেদে তাঁহার অনুভব-বীণার অভয় সূত্রের সকারিত করিয়াছেন। হে বসন্তসম্মতিত নবীণী, আপনি শতাব্দী হইয়া, এই বোহিমসায়ের মিত্র জাতির প্রাণে বীণা ও বনের প্রেরণা হারা, তাহার স্তম্ভ চেতনাকে আবৃত্ত করুন এবং প্রতিভার কলসোকে বিজাল করিয়া সূত্রভেদে প্রাচ্যকে ও প্রতীচ্যকে নব নব স্বপ্না ও সৌন্দর্য্য, কল্যাণ ও আনন্দ বিতরণ করুন।

বঙ্গীয়-সাহিত্য-পরিষৎ উনচত্বারিংশ বৎসর ব্যাপিয়া আপনাদি উপাধারায় সন্তুষ্টি সাহিত্য-সম্পদে বিপুল গুরু অনুভব করিয়াছে। আপনাদি বক্তৃতার বক্তে ইহার জাতি বার্ষিক উৎসব বস্ত্রিত হইয়াছিল। আপনাদি পঞ্চাশবৎসর পূর্ণ হইলে পরিষৎ আপনাকে অভিনন্দিত করিয়া কৃতার্থ হইয়াছিল। আপনাদি সঙ্গীর বস্ত্রিতম অঙ্গতিতে সর্বজনীন সন্তার সম্মতি করিয়া, পরিষৎ আপনাকে সন্তানের জাতি মিত্রন করিয়াছিল। কবি-বীণারের সেই সেই সন্তি-কণ্ঠ উজ্জ্বলিত পরিষদের উক্ত জাতি ও আকাঙ্ক্ষা আপনাদি কীর্তি-ভাতিতে সমৃদ্ধ হইয়া আজ সকলভার তুল্য ভূমিতে আয়োজন করিয়াছে। স-বস্ত আপনাদি, মালয়ের বিনয়র হৃৎ-হৃৎ-হৃৎ যথো সন্তার শাশ্বত বস্ত্রপকে দর্শন করিয়াছেন, এবং বস্ত্রের যথো অস্ত, বিস্ত্রের যথো সন্ত, ব্যস্ত্রের যথো সন্ত, বহর যথো প্রকারে সন্তান পাইয়া, যুগ-যুগান্ত-সন্ত ভারতের সন্তান আয়র্কক ভাগীরথী-বাহার তার বস্তো জাতি অবজীর্ণ করাইয়াছেন। হে সন্তাত্তা, আপনাকে শত শত নমস্কার।

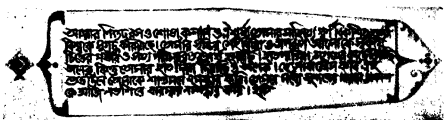
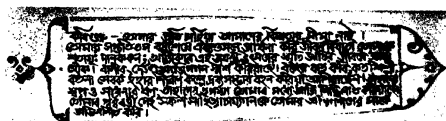
হে বাণীর বসন্ত, হে বিবরণের কবি, 'বর্ণ-বস্ত-বীতন' এই বিচিত্র বিব বাহার হরতি-বান, কবি-কোষের 'বী' অস্ত্রেরে মুখিত প্রেব-প্রজা-প্রজাপ বাহার স-চিৎ-আনন্দের প্রজ্ঞার জাতি, সেই শতর বিবস্ত্রের বিবকি আপনাদি চির-বস্তি ও শাতি বিবান করুন; বসন্ত জন্ম ন বা হৃৎ; আর, স বস্তে হৃদ্যা সন্তা সমৃদ্ধ।

ও বস্তি। ও বস্তি। ও বস্তি।

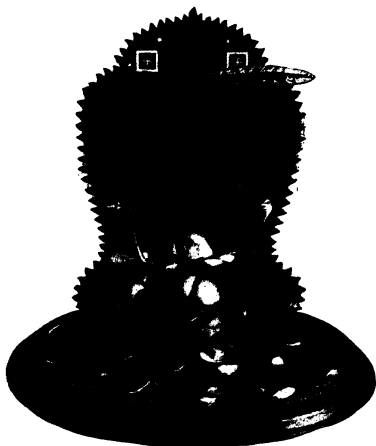
বঙ্গীয়-সাহিত্য-পরিষদের পক্ষে

সমাপ্তি।

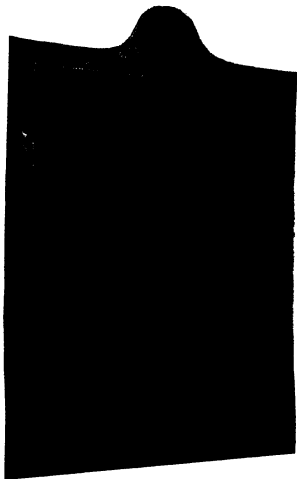
His Countrymen's Homage



The Address of Felicitations presented by the Rabindra-Jayanti Parishad in 1931 was inscribed in enamel by Nandalal Bose on three plates of gold in old Bengali script.



The Civic Address presented by the Corporation of Calcutta on the Poet's Septuagenary in 1931 was inscribed on a silver plate attached to a gold inkstand in the shape of a lotus, on which was placed a golden pen.



The Address of Felicitations presented by the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad in 1931 was inscribed in silver on a copper plate.

Courtesy : Rathindranath Tagore

Engraved & Printed by
Bharat Phototype Studio

Photographs specially taken at Santiniketan for the
"Calcutta Municipal Gazette" by D. Ratan of Calcutta.

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—This marble bas-relief portrait of the Poet unveiled at the BANGIYA SAHITYA PARISHAD by Chhatra Pratulla Chandra Ray on the occasion of the RABINDRA JAYANTI is presented by Amal Home, its Secretary, RABINDRA JAYANTI PARISHAD (Tagore Septuagenary Committee).

The bas-relief which had been made in Italy for a Jewish admirer of the Poet in Calcutta had been lying unclaimed after his sudden death in the meanwhile in the Calcutta Customs House from where it was acquired by Mr. A. K. Sarkar, Architect and Engineer who enabled Mr. Home to present it to the PARISHAD by kindly selling it to him at a nominal price.

THE BANGIYA SAHITYA PARISHAD ADDRESSES

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

Prince of Poets

On behalf of the literateurs and literature lovers of Bengal the BANGIYA SAHITYA PARISHAD hails thee with love and pride on the occasion of thy seventieth birthday.

Thou camest to the altar of the Muse of Bengali literature at a tender age. Since then through all these years thou hast served her like a devoted votary steadfastly and unafraid. Sage thy penance has borne fruit. The Goddess has dowered on thee the boon of immortality and touched the chords of thy soul with the sustaining echoes of immortal music. Oh! Seer Heaven blessed! May thou live a hundred years to rouse this sleeping nation into manhood with thy ringing message of strength and hope and from thy lofty realms of art shower on the East and the West myriad gifts of love and beauty of peace and joy.

The BANGIYA SAHITYA PARISHAD for all its thirty nine years has taken great pride in thy overflowing wealth of literary gifts. Its first anniversary meeting resounded with the trumpet call of thy voice. It had the honour of felicitating thee on thy fiftieth birthday. Again on the occasion of thy sixtieth birthday it brought to thee its offerings of respect and joy. The high hopes and wishes voiced by the PARISHAD on those memorable occasions have achieved complete fruition to-day and are reflected in thy brilliant life. Thou hast found the Truth eternal in the flitting joys and sorrows of man, thou art blessed! Thou hast found the indivisible in the divided, the whole in the parts and the one in the many, thou art blessed! Thou hast like Bhagirath of old brought back to Bharatbarsha the stream of her ancient heritage and culture. Seer crystal-eyed we bow to thee.

Beloved of the muse of letters! Oh Poet world-revered! May the great Poet of the Universe Who breathes

His magic breath over this wonderful world and fills it with colour and fragrance and song Whose trinity echoes in the heart of poets and is revealed in forms of love and knowledge and power vouchsafe thee eternal bliss and felicity.

কবির উত্তর

সাহিত্য পরিষদের প্রথম আরম্ভ কালই এই প্রতিষ্ঠান আমার অতয়ের অভিলক্ষণ লাভ করিয়াছিল। একটা উত্থার সঙ্কেত জানেন বাহাদুর ইহার প্রবর্তক। আমার অগ্রিম জির তরুণ রঞ্জিত-হৃদয়ের ত্রিবেদী অগ্নিও কথ্যমায়ে এই পরিষদ-ব পুঙ্খবহু প্রতিষ্ঠিত করিয়া তাহারক বিভিন্ন আশায়ে পরিণতি দান করিয়াছেন। এবদা আমার পরামর্শবাহিনী ভবনীয়শর তিনিই ছিলেন প্রব - উৎসাহ এবং সেই সভায় ঐতরুত গ্রিধ বৃত্ত হইতে আমার পদেদগন্ত দক্ষিণা আমি লাভ করিয়াছিলাম। সভাপতি মহাশয়েরাধায় হরপ্রসাদ াত্রেয়শর বর্তমান জরনী-উৎসবের পূর্ণনা-সভায় সভাপায়কের আসন হইতে প্রশংসাবাক্যর দ্বারা আমার উত্থার শেষ আশীর্বাদ দান করিয়া দিয়াছেন। আমি অশ্রুত কর্তেছি এই মানসত আমার পরলোকগত সেই সন্নয়র তরুণদের অলিখিত কাকর রহিয়াছে—বাহাদের হৃদয় অত পুঙ্খ বাহাদের বাকী নীরব।

অত পরিষদের বর্তমান সভাপতি প্রজ্ঞানবরণ্য জমদার আচার্য্য প্রমুখগণ এই সে মানসত সমর্পণ করিয়া আমার গৌরবান্বিত বরিলেন, এই পক্ষে সাহিত্য-পরিষদ বর-ভারতীর বরদান বরন করিয়া আমার জীবনের বিনাশ কালকে উজ্জল করিলেন—এই কণা বিদগন্ত জানলের সহিত বাক্যর করিয়া লইলাম।

THE POET'S REPLY

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

The sponsors of this Institution are aware that it received my heart's felicitations from its very inception. My sincere and dear friend Ramendra Sundar Trivedi established it in

its own house, and with tireless zeal piloted it through varied fortunes. It was he who took the lead in the celebrations on my fiftieth birthday, and it was from his friendly hands that I received the felicitations of my countrymen. The President of the PARISHAD, Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Sastri, had, at the meeting convened to arrange these functions, vouchsafed his last blessings on me through his eulogy. I feel that this address contains the unseen signatures of these dear departed friends though their hands are still and their voices hushed.

With humble and grateful joy I receive today the honour which the present President of the PARISHAD, the universally loved leader Acharya Prafulla Chandra, has conferred on me by presenting me with this address by which the SAHITYA PARISHAD conveys to me the gift of the Muse of Bengali literature and thus brighten up my declining days.

THE HINDI SAHITYA SAMMELAN ADDRESS

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

Sri Kabindra Sriman Rabindranath Thakur Mahasaya Mananiya Mahodaya,

We, the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, convey felicitous greetings to you on your seventieth birthday.

Sriman, there have been in India a goodly sequence of poets, honoured and glorified, greatly rewarded by the homage of posterity. The CHARAN poets of Raptana by their poetic advice at suitable moments changed the very course of history. Similarly, the Hindi poets established a niche for themselves in the Moghul Empire. And the great poet Bhushan helped greatly to re-establish the Hindu regime. And you have, by your great poetic attainments, won the coveted Nobel Prize and thus earned glory for your motherland.

Poet Universal! your fame as a bulwer of a comprehensive University, the Visva-Bharati, has spread over all countries and we bow to thee on thy great gift to the East and the West.

We bow to you again and pray for your happiness and long life.

हिन्दी-साहित्य-सम्मेलन- अभिनन्दन

श्रीकबीन्द्र श्रीमन् रवीन्द्रनाथ ठाकुर महाराय

माननीय महोदय,

हिन्दी-साहित्य-सम्मेलन की ओर से आपकी ७० वीं वर्ष गाँठ के अवसर पर हम आपका सादर अभिनन्दन करते और बधाई देते हैं।

श्रीमन् भारतवर्ष में एक से एक बढ़कर अनेक प्रतिभाशाली और प्रभावशाली कवि हो गये हैं, पुष्कलभन और यथेष्ट सम्मान से पुरस्कृत हुए हैं। राजपुताने के चारण कवियोंने अपने सामयिक कवित्वपूर्ण उपदेश द्वारा इतिहास का स्वरूप तक पलट दिया है, तथा हिन्दी कवियोंने मुगल सम्राटों तक को अपनी कविता का चमत्कार दिखा दिया है। और महाकवि भूषणने अपनी कविता द्वारा हिन्दुराज्य के पुनः संस्थापन में बड़ी सहायता पहुँचाई है और आपने भी अपनी विलक्षण कवित्वशक्तिसे स्पृहनीय नोबेल पुरस्कार प्राप्तकर भारत का गौरव बढ़ाया है।

कबीन्द्र! आपने विश्वभारती की स्थापना कर प्राच्य और प्रतौचिक के सम्मेलन के लिये जो क्षेत्र बना दिया है उससे आपकी कीर्ति-कौमुदी चारों दिशाओंमें फैल गई है। हमारा सांस्कृतिक दौत्य स्वीकार कर आपने जो काम योरोप और एसिया के देशों में किया है और जिस प्रकार भारत की महिमा का खान किया है उसके लिये हम आपके कृतज्ञ हैं।

हम पुनः आपका अभिनन्दन करते हुए परमात्मासे प्रार्थना करते हैं कि वह आपको दीर्घजीवन प्रदा करें।

आपके

अमर कीर्ति कामनाथी

हिन्दी साहित्य सम्मेलन का सदस्य

कविभाषण

आज हिन्दीभारती ने अपनी सहोदरा बङ्गभारती को सम्मानित किया है। मैं अपने को धन्य समझता हूँ कि देव कृपासे मैं इस शुभ अनुष्ठानका उपलक्ष हो सका हूँ। कवि का हृदय कभी अपने जन्मस्थान की सीमा के अन्दर बन्द नहीं रहता है, और यदि उसका यश इस सीमाको पार करे तो वह सौभाग्यवान है। हिन्दी साहित्यके दूतरूप आपही मेरा यह सौभाग्य बहन कर आये हैं, इस लिये आप मेरा सकृतज्ञ नमस्कार स्वीकार करें।

THE POET'S REPLY

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

Today, the Hindi Muse greets her sister the Bengali Muse. I consider myself blessed that I have by the grace of God, been able to provide the occasion for such a happy ceremony. A poet's heart can never be confined to the place of his birth, and he is indeed a fortunate poet whose fame transcends such local boundaries. You who have come as messengers of Hindi literature to convey these greetings to me, pray, accept my grateful thanks.

श्रीकाबीन्द्र-साहित्य-सम्मेलनकेर अभिनन्दन

हे कवि ! बङ्गही अर्था निरे शते तोमार मरणे
हृदय अवाग हाँते ऐ गणे, कवि-निर्देशने,
एला बाबा, से कि ताबा बरसेन हाबी तने तब ?
ता तो नर, निरुक्ति, अणुजग, छिन्न-अन्धन,
बहसेन नीला तब, निता नर बर्तनेन कोले,
मगति बहसेन रुके, सात बहसेन शित पोले
शरीर आनले नर, सबरेर हिला न बाणे,
निश्चित बिषेर नर ताब पावे छेर तू बाके।
कार छेने एत मीति ? कार बागे निता बहान ?
कार कीति निधि निधि, रति छेने बिषेर कलाप
अहुर अण-रसे, — से वे ऐ शित छिरहनी,
रुष रुष रे अणी ! बार नरीनेर अह्वनि।
बाबाकार रुकेर हलाल ! मताज्जो ! रे अमर कवि !
कालकर करे तूनि बर बेने बेने शरेर गुरबी !
छिन्न-नरुचेर सबाबोह निता होक कोनेने तोबार,
अबासेर जानाश-उता, नर ऐ अर्थापिछार।

THE PRABASI BANGA SAHITYA SAMMELAN
ADDRESS

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

Oh Poet! Those who have come from afar bearing
their offerings of felicitations heed not the accident of your
age Nay, they are drawn by the peerless ever-fresh mani-
festations of your soul The limits of your age are lost in
the fresh joys of your perennial dance and a child of seven
sleeps in the lap of seventy years wrapped in the joy of
creation It heeds not the passing of time the world gazes
at it with rapt amaze Who hath such fire in his eyes?
Whose words do flow through all the ages? Whose *joie de
vivre*, whose love is it that work for the bliss of the world?
Why is it that child eternal Oh Seer! through the ages
thou singest the glory of youth Beloved of Bengal! Clear-
visioned! Immortal Bard! May you live through time to
sing your last even-song May your life be one long riot of
verdant joy Pray accept this offering of love from your
numerous admirers outside (the Province)

রবীন্দ্র-জয়ন্তী-উৎসব-পরিষদের অভিনন্দন*

কবিগুরু,

তোমার প্রতি চাহিয়া আমাদের বিশ্বের সীমা নাই।

তোমার সপ্ততিতম-বর্ষশেষে একান্তমনে প্রার্থনা করি
জীবনবিধাতা তোমাকে শতায়ু দান করুন, আজীবন
এই জয়ন্তী-উৎসবের স্মৃতি জ্ঞাপ্তির জীবনে অক্ষয় হউন।

বাণীর রেউল আজি গগন স্পর্শ করিয়াছে। বন্ধুর
কত কবি, কত শিল্পী, কত না দেবক ইহাব নির্ধাণকল্পে
দ্রব্যসম্ভাব বহন করিয়া আনিয়াছেন, তাঁহাদের স্বপ্ন ও
সানবান ধন, তাঁহাদের তপস্যা তোমার মধ্যে আজি সিঙ্কি-
লাভ করিয়াছে। তোমার পূর্ববর্তী সকল সাহিত্যাচাৰ্য-
গণকে তোমার অভিনন্দনের মাঝে অভিনন্দিত করি।

আম্বার নিগূঢ় রস ও শোভা, কলাগণ ও ঐশ্বর্য
তোমার সাহিত্যে পূর্ণ বিকশিত ছইয়া বিশ্বকে মুগ্ধ
করিয়াছে। তোমার সৃষ্টির সেই বিচিত্র ও অপরূপ
আলোকে স্বকীয় চিত্তের গভীর ও সত্য পরিষরে কৃতকৃত্য
হইয়াছি।

হাত পাতিয়া জগতের কাছে আমরা নিয়াজি অনেক
কিন্তু তোমার হাত দিয়া সিঁদ্রিও অনেক।

হে সার্বভৌম কবি, এই শুভদিনে তোমাকে শ্রদ্ধামনে
নমস্কার করি। তোমার মধ্যে ব্রহ্মের পরম প্রকাশকে
আজি বারম্বার নতনিম্নে নমস্কার করি। ইতি—

কলিকাতা, রবীন্দ্র-জয়ন্তী-উৎসব-পরিষদ পক্ষে
রবিবার, ষষ্ঠ্যতীয়া শ্রীজগদীশচন্দ্র বহু
১১ই শৌব, ১৩০৮ সাল, বঙ্গাব্দ সভাপতি।

THE RABINDRA-JAYANTI COMMITTEE
ADDRESS

[English Translation]

O Poet-Sage,

Our wonder knows no bound as we gaze and
gaze at thee

At the close of thy seventy years we fervently
pray to the Great Dispenser to grant thee a hundred
years of life May the memory of this JAYANTI
celebration abide in the heart of the nation

Today the temple of the Muse of Letters stands
hallowed high Countless poets, countless artists,
countless votaries of Bengal have brought their
myriad gifts to this temple and helped to build it up.
Their dreams and aspirations, their penance have
borne fruit in thee In greeting thee we greet all
the literary patriarchs who have gone before

Thy works, rich in the beauty and the mystery,
the bliss and the majesty of the soul, have charmed
the world The light of thy wonderful and beautiful
creations has illumined the truth in the depth of our
own souls and made us blessed

We have stretched out our hands and received a
good deal from the world but many have been the
gifts too that we have given the world through thy
hands

Oh Poet universal! We bow to thee with peace
of mind on this auspicious day We salute, again
and again with bowed heads, the supreme manifesta-
tion of the Beautiful that is in thee revealed

কবির উত্তর

বিপুল জনসংঘের বাণসরবে আজ আমি শুভ। এখানে নানা কঠোর
সম্ভাষণ, এ যে আমারই অভিব্যক্তির উদ্দেশে সম্মিলিত, একথা আমার মন
সহজে ও স্বাভাবিকপূর্বে গ্রহণ করিতে অক্ষম। পৃথিবী আলোকে বাণসিক্ত
পুণিবর্ষীয় বাণসজলের মধ্য দিয়া পৃথিবীতে পরিচালিত হয়, কোথাও বা
সে ছায়ায় হান কোথাও বা সে অন্ধকারের ঘারা প্রভাভাব্য, কোথাও বা সে
বাস্পহীন আকাশে সন্মুক্ত, কোথাও বা গুপ্তকামনে বসন্তে ভাঙার অত্যাশা,
কোথাও বা শতক্ষেত্রে পরতে তাহার উৎসব। ঘেঁষাশুরি আমি কবিরূপে
পরিচিত হইয়াছি, কিন্তু সেই পরিচয়ের পীকার দেশবাসীর হৃদয়ে
অনবচ্ছিন্ন নহে, তাহা বসন্তভই বায়বিরোধ ও সংশয়ের ঘারা কিছু-না-কিছু
অবগুণ্ঠিত। তাহাকে বিক্ষিপ্ততা হইতে সংক্ৰিষ্ট করিয়া আবার হইতে মুক্ত
করিয়া এই জয়ন্তী অগুহান নিবিড় সংহতভাবে প্রত্যক্ষগোচর করিয়া দিল—
সেই সঙ্গে উপলব্ধি করিলাম যেখান দ্বীপিত্রাঙ্গের জ্বরকে তাহার আপন
অগ্রঞ্জন বিহাজিরূপে। সেই আশ্চর্য রূপ সেবিলাস গরম বিশ্বের, আনন্দে,
সম্ময়ের সঙ্গে, মস্তক নত করিয়া।

অজ্ঞকার এই প্রকাশ কেমন যে আমারই কাছে অপরূপ অগুরূপ তাহা সহ্য,
সেখের নিজের কাছেও। উৎসবের আয়োজন করিতে দিয়াই সেখানি সহস্য
অবিচার করিয়াছেন তাঁহার গভীর অগুরূপে মধ্যে কতটা আনন্দ, কতটা ক্রীতি
নাশ ব্যবধানের অত্যাশা অক্ষম সত্য হইতেছিল। আবাল্যকাল সেমামতার
প্রাঙ্গণ গরিয়াই আমার কণ্ঠস্বর। শাস্ত্র মাকে বধন মনে হইত উজালার
ভিনি, ভবনও বুঝি-না তাঁহার অগোচরও হয় পৌছিয়াছিল তাঁহার অগুরূপে,
বধন মনে চটখাট ভিনি মুখ কিরাইয়াছেন ভবনও হয়ত তাঁহার ভ্রমণকার রক্ত
হয় নাই। দাল ও মল, পরিণত ও অপরিণত, আমার নামা প্রায়শ ভিনি দিবে
হিসে মনে মনে আপন স্মৃতিসূত্রে গাঁথিয়া লইতেছিলেন। অদ্যশেষে সমস্ত বৎসর
বয়সে বধন আমার আবু উত্তীর্ণ হইল, বধন তাঁহার সেই মালায় শেষ গ্রন্থি
বিহার সময় আসি, তখনই আমার বীর্ণপীষদের চেষ্টা তাঁহার বৃদ্ধিগুণে সম-
ভাবে সম্পূর্ণ। সেইজন্যই তাঁহার এই সম্ভার আজ সকলের আশ্রয়,
নিদ্রাঘরে তাঁহার এই শাপি আশ উদারিত—“আমি গ্রহণ করিলাম।” সম্ভার

* The address of the RABINDRA-JAYANTI PARISHAD was
drafted by the great Bengali novelist, Sarat Chandra
Chatterji.—Compiler

হুইতে বিদায় নইবার যারের কাছে সেই যাপি শব্দ অনিত হইল আমার হৃদয়ে।
কট বিস্তর আছে, সাধনার কোন অপরাধ ঘটে নাই ইহা একেবারে অসম্ভব।
সেইগুলি চুম্বিতা চুম্বিতা বিস্তর করিবার দিন আর নাই। সে সমস্তকে
অতিক্রম করিবার আমার কর্তব্যের সে সমস্তাংশ, সে সম্পূর্ণতা প্রকাশমান ভাষ্যকেই
আমার দেশ ভাষার আপন সামগ্রী বলিবার চিন্তিত করিবার লগ্নিলেন। তাঁহার
সেই অসীমতাই এই উৎসবের মধ্য দিয়া আমাকে বহু দান করিল। আমার
জীবনের এই শেষ বয়, এই শেষ বয়।

অনুদলতা এবং প্রতিদলতা পুরস্কৃত চক্ৰবর্তীর মতই, উভয়েরই বোলে
সারিত পূর্ণ আশ্রয়প্রাপ্ত। আমার জীবন নিষ্ঠুর বিদ্যেবীর প্রকৃত দান হইতে
বঞ্চিত হয় নাই। কিন্তু তাহাতে আমার সমগ্র পরিচয়ের কতি হয় না, বরঞ্চ
তাঁহার দ্বারা যেহেতু সত্য তাহা তপস্বী হইয়া উঠে। আমার জীবনও যদি
তাঁহা না ঘটিত, তবে অন্ধকার এইদিন সার্বক হইত না। আমার আত্মপ্রাপ্ত
পরিত্রাণ ব্যাতিরিক্ত যথা দিয়া এই উৎসব আপনাকে প্রমাণ করিয়াছে। তাই
আমার গুরু ও চক্ৰ উভয় পক্ষেরই ভিত্তিকে প্রণাম করা আমার পক্ষে আর
সম্ভব হইল। যে কর্তার দ্বারা কতি হয় না, তাহারই বিদ্যার মধ্য দান—
হৃদয়ের দিনেও যেন তাহাকে চিনিতে পারি, সজ্ঞার সহিত সের তাহাকে গ্রহণ
করিতে পারি না ঘটে।

আশান্বয়ের প্রায়স্ত্র সজ্ঞা ও গৌরব আমি সত্যতঃকৃত্যে গ্রহণ করিতেছি।
আশান্বায়র এই আয়োজন সমন্বিত হইয়াছে। জীবনের পতি বশন প্রবল
পক্ষে তবল সমান গ্রহণ ও সঙ্গ করিবার দিন নাই। জীবন সপন ভূত্বার প্রায়ে
আদিয়া পৌঁছার ভয়মই তাহা অপেক্ষাকৃত সম্ভব লগ্না যার। কর্তব্য পতি
শেষের জীবনের মধ্য সমান, অনেক বিদ্যেভেদ ও বাস্তবিকতার সঙ্গ করে।
আজিকার দিনে আশান্বয়ের হাত হইতে তাই সন্নিবেশ দেশের শেষ সমান
আমি গ্রহণ করিতেছি ও দেশবাসীকে আমার সত্যতঃ কৃত্যে শেষ নমস্কার
জানাইয়া দাউতেছি।

THE POET'S REPLY

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

I stand hushed before the confluence of the myriad voice
of this vast multitude. My mind fails to grasp that the
many-throated voice here today is raised to felicitate my
humble self. Sunlight pours on this Earth—dimmed here
by the dust-laden, moisture-heavy air, there by shadows
grown dim, elsewhere repulsed by darkness yet, at other
places, it gleams in an unhumid sky, welcomed by shining
spring flowers, or nodding autumn corns. By divine grace
I am known today as a poet; but that knowledge is not
spontaneous in every heart,—it is not unmixed, and naturally
so,—with arguments and doubts. This birthday celebration
has weaned that recognition from its diffuseness, freed it from
its veil and revealed it to me in all its sincere intensity.
and I gratefully recognise the great heart of the nation
throbbing behind these demonstrations. I am thrilled at the
spectable and bow before it with reverence and joy.

Is this demonstration of today strangely fascinating to
me alone? Nay, it is fascinating to the nation as well.
While arranging for these celebrations the soul of the nation
has suddenly discovered what great bliss, what great love was
being stored in the depths of her heart behind countless
barriers, behind all its many occupations. From my very
boyhood I have tuned my voice and sung my songs at the
courtyard of my motherland. Perhaps, even when I had
felt that she cared not, the chords had touched her heart
without her knowing. Perhaps, when I had thought that
her face was averted, her ears had harkened to the music.
Perhaps, she was stringing on to the rosary of her memory
my many effusions,—weak or powerful, youthful or adept. At
last, in my seventieth year, when I have nearly run through
the span of my life, perhaps, her count of beads is ended, and
my long life's offerings stand revealed to her in its entirety.
Therefore, today, are here all invited—therefore is uttered
her voice in 'Thy gift is welcome'. That voice echoes in
my heart distinctly on the threshold of my exit. Short-
comings there are many; it is impossible that I have not

fallen from my high resolve. But the time is not now to
reckon the flaws. My country has marked for her own
the time aspect, the fulfilment of the work I have been able
to achieve through my endeavours in spite of these draw-
backs. That acceptance, today, is my greatest benediction.
It is the greatest and last blessing of my life.

Sympathy and hostility are complementary like the two
phases of the moon—the nights are incomplete without
either. My life has not been free from the grief of cruel
opposition. But it is no bar to a knowledge of my self; on the
contrary it brings out in better relief all that is wholesome
and true in me. If it were not so, today's function were
in vain. This celebration has proved itself true through the
all the hurts my reputation have received. That makes it
easy for me to bow to both what is dark and bright in my
life. The grief that hurts not is the greatest benediction of
Providence. May I recognise this in my day of sorrow, may
I accept it always with humble gratitude.

I accept with a grateful heart your offerings of love and
honour. May I suggest that this occasion is apposite in point
of time? For, when the tides of life are strong, honour is
not easily borne and accepted. But when life recedes to the
brink of death, then is honour no longer a heavy impost.
In the bustle and stir of forceful life, distinction creates much
dissention and discord. On the eve of my life, therefore, I
have no hesitation in accepting from your hands with complete
humility the gift of the nation's last offering of homage, and
I convey with gratitude my last greetings to the nation for
it.

ছাত্র-ছাত্রী-উৎসব-পরিষদের অভিনন্দন

পদ্মনী

শ্রীমুক্ত রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর.

শ্রীচরণে

কে কবি,

তোমার সপ্ততিম জন্মোৎসব বাংলাদেশের ছাত্র ও ছাত্রীদের প্রণাম
গ্রহণ কর।

আমাদের জীবনযাত্রার পথে কি অগতির ঘে তোমার দান, তাহা কেমন
করিয়া বলি? জীবনের বিভিন্নক্ষেত্রে তোমার প্রতিভার অসামান্যতা আমাদের
চিত্তের দলভুলিকে বিকশিত করিয়াছে। তুমিই আমাদের মুখে ভাষা দিয়াছ
অন্তরে সমুদ্ভূতি দিয়াছ, জীবনকে বৃহত্তর ও মহত্তর করিয়া দেখিতে শিখাইয়াছ।
জীবনযাত্রার রহস্যবর্তন তুমিই ছিন্ন করিলে; তুমিই প্রথম শিখাইলে,
বিভিন্ন করিলা, বিনাশিকাকে জীবনযাত্রার সহিত মূল রাশিরা প্রাণপ্রসূতির
ও মনপ্রসূতির বিভিন্ন সীলার অঙ্গরূপে তাহাকে গ্রহণ করিতে হইবে। কাল
তোমাকে স্পর্শ করে নাই, তোমার প্রতিভা স্বদেশের সীমাকে অতিক্রম
করিয়াছে; তুমি স্বদেশের ও স্বর্গকালের কবি,—তোমাকে আমরা অভিনন্দিত
করিতেছি।

হে নিজ, তোমার নামকে তুমি সার্বক করিয়াছ; উত্তর পূর্বভালে, তোমার
অমর্য্য সমস্ত পৃথিবী জুড়িয়া। হে সার্বভৌম, তুমি সমুদ্র-বসনা পৃথিবীকে
জয় করিয়া তাহার উপর আধিপত্য বিস্তার করিয়াছ। তোমার আসনভালে
শ্রমণ এবং বিশ্রাম আর অর্ধাংশের জন্ত সমবেত,—তাহারি একপ্রান্তে আমরা
প্রাণ নিবেদন করিলাম; হে স্বপ্ন, তুমি গ্রহণ করিও।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর -

ছাত্র-ছাত্রী-উৎসব পরিষদ

কলিকাতা।

১৫ই পৌষ, ১৩৮

সেনেট হল

THE STUDENTS' ADDRESS

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

Poet and Sage,

Pray, accept our reverent obeisance on the occasion of
your seventieth birthday,

How can we compute the wealth thou hast bequeathed to
us? The glow of thy genius has opened forth the petals of

our hearts. Thou hast taught us to speak, to feel, to realize the greater self in man. Thou hast raised the veil from the valley of life. Thou hast taught us that education is not merely a mummery—that the heart and the soul are necessary adjuncts. Time hath not touched you. Thy genius hath transgressed the limits of time. Thou art the poet of all ages and all times. We all bow to thee.

Friend! thou hast justified thy name. Thy fame spreads like the glow of dawn over the East. Poet of the Universe! Thou hast established thy sovereignty over the seas. Thy nation and the world at large are assembled today at thy altar to pay thee homage—we mingle our humble greetings in that poem of praise.

Friend! we bow to thee.

কবির উত্তর

আজ সত্তর বছর বয়সে সাধারণের কাছে আমার পরিচয় একটা পরিণামে এসেছে। তাই আশা করি যারা আমারকে জানবার কিছুবার চেষ্টা করেছেন এত দিনে অসন্তোষ তাঁরা একথা জেনেছেন যে, আমি জর্দি জগতে জন্মগ্রহণ করিনি। আমি চোখ মেলে বা চোখমুখ চোখ আমার ভাতের ভখনও স্পষ্ট হ'ল না, বিশ্বাসের অস্ত্র পাইনি। চোখটাকে খেঁদে ক'রে আদিকালের যে অনাহতবাণী অনন্তকালের অভিমুখে পলিত ভাবে আমার মনপ্রাণ লাড়ানিয়েছে, মনে হয়েছে যুগ যুগে এই বিশ্ববাণী শুনে এলুম। সৌমভঙ্গীর প্রান্তে এই আমায়ের ছোট ভান্ডা পৃথিবীকে বহুবার আকাশ সুতভুলি বিচিত্র-রংয়ের বর্ণসম্বার সাজিয়ে দিয়ে যার, এই আমায়ের অমৃত্যুতানে আমার ধন্যদের অভিব্যক্ত্যের নিরে বোশ মিলে কোমলিমা জালত করিনি। প্রতিদিন উভাফালে অমৃত্যুর হারির প্রান্তে শুক হয়ে গাড়িয়েছি এই কথার উপলব্ধি করবার অন্তে যে—যন্তে রংগে কল্যাণভনং তন্তে পত্নামি। আমি সেই খিরাট সন্তাকে আমার অমৃত্যুতবে স্পর্শ করতে চেয়েছি, যিনি সকল সত্তার আত্মার সত্যের ঐক্যভাব, বীর খুঁতেই নিরন্তর অব্যবহরণের প্রকাশে বিভিন্নভাবে আমার প্রাণ বৃন্দী হয়ে উঠে—বলে উঠে—কোথেকেজানি ক: প্রাণাণ্য যমের আকাশ আমনো ন স্তাং; বাতে কোনো প্রত্যক্ষন নেই তাও আমায়ের টানে টানবে, এই অত্যাশ্চর্য ব্যাপারের চরম অর্থ বীর মধ্যে; যিনি অন্তরে অন্তরে মানুষকে পরিপূর্ণ ক'রে বিজ্ঞান বলেই প্রাণপন কটোর আত্মত্যাগকে আমার আত্মত্যাগী পাগলের পাগলাফি বলে হেসে উঠলুম না।

বীর লাগি হারি অমৃত্যুর

চ'লেছে মানববাহিনী যুগ বহুতর পানে

বীর লাগি

হাজপুত পরিচয়ে ছিন্ন কবি, বিশ্বের বিরোধী

পনের চিক্কুত, মহাপ্রাণ সফিরারে পলে পলে

সংসারের কুয় উৎপীড়ন, তুচ্ছের কুৎসার ভলে

প্রভাবের বীভৎসতা।

বীর পদে মারী ন'পিতায়ে মান,

বীরী ন'পিতায়ে ধন, বীর ন'পিতায়ে আত্মপ্রাণ,

বাহারি উদ্দেশ্যে কবি বিরহিয়া লক্ষ লক্ষ পান

ছড়াইছে দেশে দেশে।

ইশোপমিষদের গ্রন্থন যে বলে শক্তিবন বীণা পেয়েছিলেন, সেই ময় বার-বার নতুন নতুন অর্থ নিয়ে আমার মনে আন্দোলিত হয়েছে, বার-বার নিজেকে বলতে—ভেন ভাঙেন ভূতীয়া: বা যুগ:; আনন্দ কর তাই নিয়ে বা ভোমার কাছে নথেকে এসেছে, বা হয়েছে ভোমার চারিদিকে, তাইই হলো স্নিগ্ধতম, মোহক ক'রো না। কাব্যসাধনার এই ময় মহামুখ্য। আসক্তি বাকে হাকডমার বড় ভালে জড়ার ভাকে ধীর করে দেবে, ভাতে রাগি আসে স্নানি আসে। কেন না আসক্তি ভাকে সমগ্র থেকে উৎপাটন ক'রে নিজের নীহার মধ্যে বাঁধে—ভার পরে তোলা স্কুলের মত অনরকসেই নে রান হয়। মহৎ সাহিত্য ভোমকে মোহ থেকে উদ্ধার করে, সৌন্দর্যকে আসক্তি থেকে,

চিত্তকে উপভিত্ত পরকে হতভালীর কাছে থেকে। হাফের বরে শীতা সোভের হাফা নকী, হাফের বরে শীতা সোভের হাফা সুল, সেইখানেই তাঁর সভ্যপ্রকাশ। প্রেমের কাছে পেছের অশ্রুপন্ন রূপ প্রকাশ পায়, সোভের কাছে তার মূল বাসে।

অনেকদিন থেকেই গিয়ে আসতি, জীবনের নামা পড়ে দান। অমৃত্যুর সুক করেছি কাঁটা বরেন—ভখনও নিজেকে বুঝি। তাই আমার লেখার মধ্যে বাফালা এবং বর্জনীর খিনিন ভূরি ভূরি আছে তাতে সন্দেহ নেই। এ সমস্ত আত্মজ্ঞান বাহ মিলে বাকী বা পাকে আশা করি তার মধ্যে এই বোষণটি পাই দে—আমি ভালবেসেছি এই জগৎকে, আমি প্রাণ্য করেছি মহৎকে, আমি কামনা করেছি সুখকে, যে-সুখি পরম পুরুষের কাছে আত্মনিবেদনে, আমি বিশ্বাস করেছি মানুষের সত্য মহামানবের মধ্যে যিনি সত্য জ্ঞানার্থে জ্বলে সরিষা:। আমি আবার। অন্যতর ঐকান্তিক সাহিত্যসাধনার বজীকে অতিক্রম ক'রে একথা সেই মহামানবের উদ্দেশ্যে বহাসাধা আমার কণ্ঠের অর্থ্য, আমার ভ্রাণের সৈবন্তে হারান করেছি—ভাতের হািরের থেকে বহি বাধা গেয়ে বাকি অন্তরের থেকে পেরেটি প্রকাশ। আমি এসেছি এই বর্জনীর মহাভীর্বে—এখানে সর্ববিশ্ব সর্বজাতি ও সর্বকালের ইতিহাসের মহাক্ষেত্রে আছেন মহাবেত্তা—তাঁরই বৌদুসে নিভৃত বসে আমার অমৃত্যুর আমার তেমহুঁচি কালন করবার হুসাধা চেষ্টার আশঙ্ক ও প্রবৃত্তি আছে।

আমার বা-কিছু অলিকটকর তাকে অতিক্রম করেও যনি আমার চরিত্রের অপরন্তম প্রভুতি ও সাধনা লেখার প্রকাশ গেয়ে থাকে, আমন দিয়ে থাকে, তবে তার পরিবর্তে আমি প্রীতি কামনা করি, আর কিছু নয়। এ কথা যেন জেনে যাউ, অসুখিম সৌন্দর্য পেরেছি, সেই তাঁদের কাছে যারা আমার সমস্ত ক্রটি সন্তেও জেনেছেন সমস্ত জাফন আমি কি চেয়েছি, কি পেরেছি, কি বিচিড়ে, আমার অপূর্ণ জীবনে অসমাপ্ত সাধনার কি ইচ্ছা আছে।

মস্তাশোকের স্তোত্রনা এই প্রীতি আমি পেরেছি—এ কথা প্রাণেশের সঙ্গে বলি। পেরেছি পৃথিবীর অনেক বর্জনীরের হাত থেকে—তাঁদের কাছে স্তম্ভজ্ঞতা নয়, আমার জ্বল বিবেচন ক'রে যিরে দেলো। তাঁদের হৃদয় হাতের স্পর্শে খিরাট মাফেবইই স্পর্শ মেগেতে আমার ললাটে,—আমার বা-কিছু স্তোত্র তাঁদের গ্রহণের বোধ্য হোক।

আর আমার মনেশের সৌক বীরা অভি-নিকটের অভি-পরিচয়ের অশেষতা তেল করেও আমাকে ভালবাসতে পেরেছেন, আজ এই অমৃত্যুতানে তাঁদেরই বহৎপ্রতিষ্ঠা অর্থ্য সম্বন্ধিত। তাঁদের সেই ভালবাসা ধন্যদের সঙ্গে গ্রহণ করি।

জীবনের পথ যিনের প্রান্তে এসে

মিলিবার পাশে পদধন হয়েছো সারা।

অমূলি তুলি ভারান্ডলি অনিধিবে

বাইত: বলিরা নীরবে বিস্তরে সারা।

হাশ বিশ্বসের শেখের হুহন কুলে

এ কুল হইতে নব জীবনের কুলে

চলেছি আমার বাজা করিতে সারা।

হে মোর সত্তা, বাহা কিছু ছিল সাধে

রাখিছু তোমার অকলসলে ঢাকি।

বীহারের সানী, তোমার কল হাতে

বীধিরা দিলাম আমার হাতের সানী।

কত যে প্রান্তের আশা ও হাতের গীতি,

কত যে হৃদয়ের যুতি ও হুহবে প্রীতি,

বিহার বোলা আশিও রহিল বাকী।

বা-কিছু পেরেছি, বাহা কিছু বেল কুলে,

চলিতে চলিতে পিছিয়া রহিল পড়ে,

যে মণি মূলিল যে বাফা বিবিল কুলে,

হাফা হয়ে বাহা বিহার দিগন্তরে,

জীবনের বন কিছুই বাসে না বোলা,

কুয়ার ভাবে বড় হোক অবহেলা,

পূর্ণের পদ-পদম ভায়ের পদে।

THE POET'S REPLY *

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

Today at seventy I stand in a definite relationship with the public. It is, therefore, my earnest hope that those who have sought to understand me have at least realised that I was born into no mean world. The wonder that met my eyes as I opened them has never waned. My heart has hearkened to the voice that echoes from the beginning of time to the end of eternity—I feel that I have heard that voice through æons of time. The translucent colours with which the seasons deck our little verdant planet amongst all the suns and stars—I have never been tired of watching this marvellous panorama and greeting it with my heart's yearnings. At the edge of night I have stood before many a dawn in mute silence only to inwardly feel that I was looking on beauty that was most filled with bliss. I have sought to feel within myself that Great Presence which unifies all ties on earth, Whose smile is always breaking in myriad forms and gladdening my heart, Which says **कोविवाच्यात् कः प्राण्यात् यदेष आकाश आनन्दो न स्यात्**, in Whom is found the ultimate remarkable phenomenon that there is joyous attraction in even the most purposeless trifle, but for Whose presence in every heart; any intense self-denial would be as ludicrous as a lunatic's desire to commit suicide—

At Whose urge

Mankind travel through dark nights

From age to another age.

For whose sake

A prince is dressed in rags, a beggar,

Discarding worldly wealth, the noble endure

A thousand petty persecutions of the world,

The daily horror of petty calumny,

At whose feet have laid

The famous their fame, the wealthy wealth,

The brave have rendered their lives;

Unto whom the poet has sung

Millions of songs and strewn them far and wide.

The *mantra* in the *Ishopanishad* from which my father first drew his inspiration has been repeatedly and freshly revealed to my mind. I have told myself again and again **तेन त्यक्तेन भूजीथाः मायुः**; rejoice in that which comes easily to you, which is all about you, which is eternal and hunger not. To the service of poetry this is a great rule. Whosoever falls within the spider-like grip of desire is quickly dried up, it brings grief and strain. For desire uproots him from his surrounding entirety and keeps him within a fold—and then he quickly wilts like a plucked flower. Noble literature saves enjoyment from desire, beauty from hunger, the soul from critics who have their axe to grind. Sita was a prisoner at the hands of Ravana's lust, she was free in Rama's home by virtue of his love,—and that is her true picture. The human body assumes a strange beauty in the eyes of love, in the eyes of lust it is but gross flesh.

* This was originally prepared by the Poet for reading at the great public reception at the Town Hall on the 27th December, 1931, in joint reply to all the addresses but later the idea was abandoned, and it was read in reply to the address presented by the students of Calcutta at the Senate Hall. Only the concluding portion of the address is given.

I have been writing for many a long day, through many chapters and phases of life. I started at a tender age when I had hardly realised myself. It can hardly be gainsaid therefore that there is much in my writing that is superfluous and should be discarded. When all such debris is removed I hope that there will still remain a portion which will clearly prove that I have loved this universe, that I have bowed before greatness, that I have sought liberty—liberty that lies in dedicating oneself to the Supreme Being, that I have believed that Truth comes out of that Greater Truth, that Being Who dwells in every heart. I have looked beyond the bourne of my life-long literary practice and gathered the offerings of service and the gift of sacrifice for dedication to that Supreme Being. If it has meant opposition from outside it has brought satisfaction within. I have come to this earth—to this great place of pilgrimage—where, at the very centre of all countries, all nations, all ages, sits The God in man; there, at that altar, I still sit in solitude and vainly seek to purge myself of all pride, all prejudices.

If in spite of much that is of little value in my writings they can still reveal my innermost nature and my idealism and can gladden the hearts of others, I wish for nothing in return but affection. May I know before I depart that I have realised what it was that all my life I have sought and got and given, what hint lies hidden in the unfinished worship of my unfulfilled life?

I bow and confess that I have had the privilege of receiving this greatest gift in this world—the gift of affection. I have received it from many of the world's adored men; to them I render not merely my gratitude but my very heart. The touch of their right hand on my forehead was as the touch of immense humanity, may all that is best in me be worthy of their acceptance.

And at today's function the gift offerings are arranged with infinite care by those of my own countrymen who have found it possible to love me in spite of the fact that I stand too close to them, am too familiar to them. I fold that love to my heart.

My life's pathway at the journey's end

Is lost in the gloom of the night

The winkless stars from the heavens lend

Their silent reassuring light.

With flowers culled in the declining day,

From shore to a stranger shore I stray—

The end of my travels is in sight.

My eventide! all that I possess

I leave concealed in thy pall;

Unto thy tender hands I press

The loves that still enthral.

The promise of dawns, nights' refrains

The memory of joys, the fellowship of pains—

I depart and I leave them all.

Aught that I received, aught that is o'er

I forsake as forward I hie

The garlands I've worn, the sorrows I bore

Melt into the haze of the sky—

But all life's treasures, survive they must

However much we fling them to the dust—

The feet of the Eternal on them lie.

INDIAN SOCIETY OF ORIENTAL ARTS

THE POET'S SONG IN REPLY TO FELICITATIONS

তোমাদের হান যশের ভালার

সব শেষ সঞ্চয় (আমার)

নিভে যেন লাগে ভয়।

এই রূপলোকে হবে এসেছিহু হাতে

গেঁথেছিহু মালা ঝরে-পড়া পারিজাতে,

আঁধারে অন্ধ, এ যে গাঁথা তারি হাতে

কী দিল এ পরিচয়।

এরে পরাবে কি কলালক্ষীর গলে
সাতনরী হার বেধায় মারিণি জলে ?

একদা স্বপ্ন অমরার উৎসবে

দ্রাবন ফুল ফল ধনিয়া পড়িবে কবে,

এ আদর যদি লক্ষ্যার পরাভবে

সেদিন মলিন হয় ॥

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

Diffidently I take this gift from you

The last precious offering to my fame.

In what distant night I came to this world of forms,

And this garland of celestial flowers† dropped down,

Darkling I wrought, but He it was who guided my fingers.

What message has it borne to-day.

Would it adorn the goddess of Art

Decked with a seven-stringed necklace where gems

sparkle and shine ?

Perchance at some festival of immortals

These flowers will wither and fall,

And this gift of love may be dimmed

In the shame of ingloriousness.

† Parijat.

অর্থ্যমিহং*

অর্থ্যদান

দেবদত্তদমন শীতমিব তে বন্দ্যোজ্জল শীতল
দীপোঃ প্রতিমাশ্রমাব হুত তে কান্ত: স্থিরং দীপ্যতে।
ধূপোঃ তব কাস্তিসম্বয় ইবামোদেদিশো ব্যবহৃত
মাল্যং নির্মলকামলং তব মনস্তুল্যং সমুদ্রাস্তে ॥
কম্বুস্বাপিতমেতদম্বু সরসং কাব্যং ত্বদীয়ং যথা
পুষ্পশ্রেণিরিযং গুণালিবিব তে পয়ঃজনা-কর্ণিণ।
অর্থ্যং ত্যজিত্বং কৃতং তব কৃতে দুর্মাঙ্কুরাধান্বিতং
নন্দেতৎ প্রতিদ্রষ্টা করুণয়া স্বস্ত্যস্তু তে শাস্তবলম্ ॥

প্রশস্তিপাঠ

মেদো यस্য ন বস্তুতোঃস্তুি ভুবনে প্রাচী প্রতীচীসি বা
মিত্রত্বং প্রকটীকৃতং চ সসতং যেনাত্মন: কৰ্মণা।
বিশ্বং যস্য পদং প্রসিদ্ধমনিশং সত্যং চ যস্য স্থিতি-
শ্চ যাত্ৰ সত্য জযো রবেরবিরতং তেনাস্তু তৃপ্তং জগত্ ॥

শান্তিপাঠ

পৃথিবী শান্তিরন্তরিত্বাং শান্তির্যো: শান্তিরায়: শান্তিঃ রোধয়:
শান্তির্বিধে তো দেবা: শান্তি: শান্তি: শান্তি: শান্তিমিবি:।
তামি: শান্তিমি: সবেশান্তিমি: শময়ামোষ্যং যদিহু ঘোরং
দ্বিহু ক্লুরং যদিহু পাণং তচ্ছান্তং তচ্ছিবং সর্বমেবং শমস্তুত: ॥

Text of the Sanskrit 'Slokas' with Bengali translations
read out by Pandit Vidhusekhar Sastri in offering ARGHYA
to the Poet on behalf of the RABINDRA-JAYANTI PARISHAD
(Tagore Septuagenary Celebrations Committee) on Dec. 27,
1931.

অর্থ্যদান

আপনার শীলের ত্রায় এই চন্দন চন্দ্রের মত উজ্জল ও শীতল,
আপনার রমণীয় প্রতিভাপ্রভাবের ত্রায় এই দীপ হিরণ্যাবে দীপ্তি
প্রাপ্ত হইতেছে। আপনার কীত্তিরশির ত্রায় এই ধূপ সৌরভে
সমস্ত নিককে ব্যাপ্ত করিতেছে। আপনার মনের ত্রায় নির্মল ও
কামল এই মালা উদ্ভাসিত হইয়া বহিয়াছে। আপনার কাব্যের
ত্রায় সরস এই জল শব্দে স্থাপিত করা হইয়াছে, এবং আপনার
গুণসমূহের ত্রায় এই কুম্বগুলি ধর্মকগণকে আকর্ষণ করিতেছে।
দুর্বার অম্বর প্রভৃতির দ্বারা আমরা আপনার অস্ত্র এই অর্থ্য রচনা
করিয়াছি। আপনি করুণা করিয়া ইহা গ্রহণ করুন। আপনার
শান্ত কুশল হউক !

প্রশস্তিপাঠ

বাহার প্রাচী ও প্রতীচী বলিয়া ভুবনে বস্তুত: কোন ভেদ
নাই, যিনি সত্ত্ব নিষের কর্ণের দ্বারা প্রকটিত করিয়াছেন যে
তিনি মিথ, বিশ্বই বাহার প্রসিদ্ধ স্থান, এবং সত্যেই যিনি নিয়ত
অবস্থান করেন, সেই রবির অবিরাম জয় হউক ও তাহা দ্বারা
জগৎ তৃপ্তি লাভ করুক !

শান্তিপাঠ

পৃথিবী শান্তিময় হউক ! অন্তরীক শান্তিময় হউক ! দ্ব্যলোক
শান্তিময় হউক ! জল শান্তিময় হউক ! গুহমিসমূহ শান্তিময় হউক !
বিশ্বদেবগণ আমাদের অস্ত্র শান্তিময় হউন ! এখানে বাহা কিছু
ভয়ানক, বাহা কিছু ক্রুর, বাহা কিছু পাপ, তাহা আমরা সেই
সকল শান্তি দ্বারা, সমস্ত শান্তির দ্বারা উপশমিত করি। তাহা
শান্ত হউক ! তাহা শিব হউক ! সমস্তই আমাদের কল্যাণকর
হউক !

When OXFORD Came to VISVA-BHARATI

CONFERMENT
OF
HONORARY DEGREE
ON
THE POET



The Poet being conducted to the dais by Sir S. Radhakrishnan and Sir Maurice Gwyer at the Special Convocation of Oxford University at Santiniketan

OXFORD came to VISVA BHARATI on August 7, 1940—just a year before the Poet passed away—to confer on him the degree of Doctor of Literature (*Honoris Causa*)

For the first time in the history of Oxford University, that ancient seat of learning had arranged for a Special Convocation in a distant land to confer such an honour on a distinguished man. Early this year (1941), it may be recalled, Oxford conferred a similar honour in similar manner on President Roosevelt through her Chancellor Lord Halifax, Britain's Ambassador to America.

The ceremony, which accompanied the investiture, reproduced in miniature a regular convocation of Oxford University for the conferment of honorary degrees. Sir Maurice Gwyer, Chief Justice of India, together with Sir S. Radhakrishnan, represented Oxford University at the function, they being specially authorized by the University to confer the degree on Dr. Tagore on its behalf. Mr. Justice Henderson, of the Calcutta High Court, played the role of the Public Orator who usually reads out the address of the University to the recipient of the honour.

According to time-honoured custom, the address was read out in Latin, an English translation of which was repeated to the audience by Sir S. Radhakrishnan. Dr. Tagore replied to the address in Sanskrit and himself rendered it into English for the benefit of the audience. Sir Maurice Gwyer, who presided over the function, wound up the proceedings with a brief address.

The function took place in the Sinha Sadan, which was tastefully decorated for the occasion. On the dais were seated the representatives of Oxford University and Dr. Tagore. Facing the dais on the floor were two rows of chairs which were occupied by graduates of Oxford University, representatives of some of the Indian Universities, and a few prominent persons connected with education. Behind these sat some more invited persons, and students and professors of Visva Bharati.

A few minutes before the actual ceremony, Sir Maurice Gwyer took his seat on the dais. He wore the scarlet gown of a Doctor of Civil Law of Oxford University. He was followed by Sir S. Radhakrishnan, Mr. Justice Henderson and Mr. J. M. Bottomley, Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, all of whom occupied allotted seats on the dais.

A little later, Dr. Tagore entered the hall, clad in the grey and pink gown of a Doctor of Literature of Oxford University. As he entered everybody rose in his seat.

The proceedings began with the singing of a Vedic hymn by the girl students of Visva-Bharati. Mr. Justice Henderson then read out the Latin address after which Sir Maurice conferred the degree on Dr. Tagore according to the prescribed Latin formula. After the conferment of the degree, Sir Maurice walked across the dais and shook hands with Dr. Tagore. This brought the ceremony to a close.

THE CEREMONY

VEDIC HYMN

স্বস্তি সন্ধ্যাসু জরম সূর্য্যকন্ডমসোবষ ।
সুৰ্য্যবাস্তা জাৰতা সঁ গমেসহি ॥

Like Sun and Moon we shall follow the path of welfare and attain companionship of men who are generous, hateless and wise.

(Rig Veda 5 51 15)

যে দেবানাং যজ্ঞিয়া যজ্ঞিয়ানাং মনোৰজনা অমৃত্যু মৃত্যুনাঃ ।
তে নো রাসন্ত্যাস্তুজায়ময় দুৰ্য্য বাত স্বস্তির্মিঃ স্তবা নঃ ॥

Those who are revered by the Immortals and are also respected by the world of man, those who are fearless and righteous—let them to-day show us the path of greatness. Ye wise men! continue to guide us by your good wishes.

(Rig Veda 7 35 15)

BENGALI SONG

বিশ্ববিভাভীৰ্ণপ্রাঙ্গণ করে যমোচ্ছল আশ হে
বহুপুত্র সংঘ বিবাহ হে ।

যন তিনির হাতিব চির প্রতীক্ষা

পূর্ণ করে, লহ জ্যোতির্লীলা,

হাতিবল সব সাজ হে,

দিব্য বীণা বাজ হে,

এসো কর্মী এসো জ্ঞানী

এসো জন কল্যাণধারী

এসো তাপস রাজ হে ।

এসো হে বীণজি-সম্পদ মুক্তবদ্ধ সমাজ হে ।

(English Translation)

Bring brilliance in the great court of knowledge
take your seats there, you the children

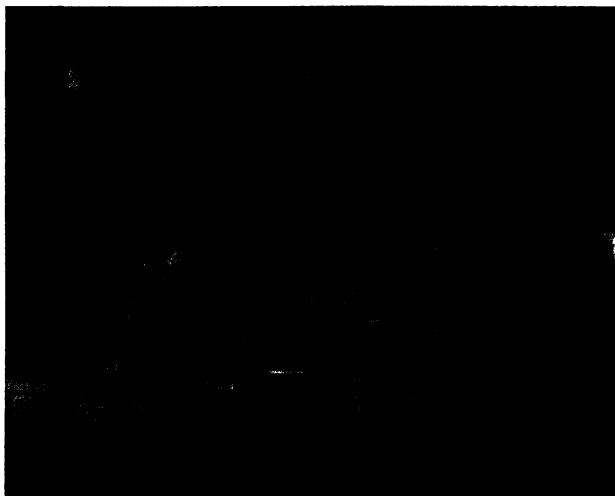
of the Immortal

Let the hope be fulfilled of the long dark night of
penance at the initiation o. light.

Let Pilgrims be ready for the journey of Truth,
and divine music descend from above.

Come ye wise, come workers,
come ye who contemplate people's good,
and offer supreme self-sacrifice.

Come those who are rich in mind—
who are free of all illusions



—Sir Maurice Gwyer shaking hands with Dr. Tagore after the conferment of the honorary degree of D.Litt. by Oxford

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ADDRESS BY DELEGATES FROM OXFORD

VIR INSIGNISSIME, MATRIS OXONIAE GRATISSIMA
SUBOLES, QUI DOMINI

Vice-Cancellari et Procuratorum vicem geris, hodie adest illustrissimus Indiae filius, cuius in domo, ut in nulla usquam alia Horatianum illud

fortes creantur fortibus et bonis

repraesentari videmus. Quid avum referam primum illum religionum ac disciplinae novae conditorem inter primos quoque a popularibus suis quos trans Oceanum dissociabilem navigasse et usque ad ultimos Britannos adfectos esse constat : Quod patrem virum rectissimum, religionum hunc quoque vindicem acerrimum cuius sanctitas ac sapientia suis omnibus innotuit - Quid sororem mulierem excellentissimam, quae fictas de suis historiis prima Indorum conscribere ausa est - Quid fratrum illum transiensem, quorum unus ut patriae administrationi interesset, primus Indorum ascitus est, alter in litteris ac philosophia tertius in arte Apella inter aequales eminebat. Sed genti suae quartus hic fratrum vita ingenio moribus tantum veracis laudis additamentum contulit, ut de se ipse posset nisi quidem viro sanctissimo verecundia obstaret eisdem quibus Scipio illa verbis iure optimo praedicare

virtutes generis in eis moribus accumulavit,

Quid quod adest doctissimus litterarum artifex, sive victo numeris sermone utitur seu soluto - Ecce quae lyrica fabulas satiras historias omne fere scribendi genus tetigit nullum non ornavit. O miram in eodem viro fecunditatem miram laetundam ! Qui prout lecti animi puerne divini agilitas docet nos videt exagitat delectat, commovet ea tamen lege ut hominem vere esse, humani nihil a se alienum putantem semper appareat. Quid quod adest musicus omnibus velut numeris absolutus novorum mille modorum repertor ? Quid quod philosophus eximius qui rerum, hominum, deorum denique naturam pentus persecutus mentis illam ataraxiam optatam a multis, a paucis conquistam iam tandem est consecutus - Et tamen his ille studius deditus non sibi tantum vixit. Nihil enim antiquius ratus quam ut pueri bonis artibus instituantur, scholae illius egregiae, ubi discipulis ad philosophandum informandis sapientissime consulitur, est auctor idem atque fautor. Accedit quod publico commodo umbratilem vitae conditionem non ita praeiuvat ut pulverem ac solem reipublicae omnino detractaverit : est ubi in forum descendere dignatus non sit, est ubi nos Britannos, est ubi praefactorum auctoritatem, siquid perperam fieri visum sit, in iudicium vocare non reformidaverit, est ubi cives errantes castigare sustinuerit. Quid plura ? Adest poeta et scriptor 'myrionous', adest musicus in arte sua praecclarissimus, adest et verbo et re philosophus, adest disciplinae ac doctrinae bonae fautor acerrimus, adest civitatis defensor ardentissimus, adest denique qui vitae ac morum sanctitate omnes omnium ubique approbationes sibi vindicavit. Itaque, Vice-Cancellario, Doctoribus Magistris omnibus uno animo faventibus, praesento tibi virum musikotaton'. Rabindranath Tagore, praemio Nobeliano iam insignitum, ut Oxoniensium quoque lauream accipiat et admittatur ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris honoris causa.

(TRANSLATION)

Honoured Sir, on whom the choice of your mother Oxford has fallen to sit to-day in the place of the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors, you have before you India's most distinguished son, in whose family no more perfect illustration can be found of that verse of Horace : "A noble line gives proof of noble sires".

Let me recall his grand-father, the member of a new religious faith and a new fraternity, who was one of the first of his countrymen to cross the estranging sea and visit the

distant land of Britain; his father, a religious leader of singular rectitude and burning faith, whose piety and wisdom distinguished him among all his countrymen. I recall his gifted sister, and the first of her sex in India to attempt a novel of Indian life, his three brothers of whom one was the first Indian member of the Indian Civil Service, a second was distinguished among his contemporaries in philosophy and a third in literature and the arts. But the fourth brother who is present before you now has by his life, his genius and his character augmented so greatly the fame of his house that, did his piety and modesty not forbid, none would have a better right to say in Scipio's famous phrase : "My life has crowned the virtues of my life." You see in him a great scholar and a great artist, both in prose and in verse, one who has written poetry, romance, satire, history, who has left scarcely any field of literature untouched and has touched nothing that he has not adorned. How rarely has such richness of imagination been combined with such elegance of style ! How astonishing is the range of his versatile genius, wisdom and laughter, terror and delight, the power of stirring our deepest emotions ! And yet we are always conscious of his essential humanity, of a man who thinks nothing beneath his notice, if only it is concerned with mankind. You see in him a musician who seems to obey no rules and yet has invented a thousand new melodies; a distinguished philosopher deeply versed in natural philosophy, in ethics and in theology and who has at the last achieved that complete serenity of mind sought by how many and won by how few. Yet all dedicated as he has been to those pursuits, he has not lived for himself alone : for deeming good education for the young the most venerable of all institutions he has been the founder and director of his famous Academy, whose purpose is by wise methods to inculcate among its students a love of pure learning. Let it also be said that he has not valued a sheltered life so far above the public good as to hold himself wholly aloof from the dust and heat of the world outside, for there have been times when he has not scorned to step down into the market-place; when, if he thought that a wrong had been done he has not feared to challenge the British raj itself and the authority of its magistrates, and when he has boldly corrected the faults of his own fellow-citizens. What more can I say ? Here before you is the myriad-minded poet and writer, the musician famous in his art, the philosopher proved both in word and deed, the fervent upholder of learning and sound doctrine, the ardent defender of public liberties, one who by the sanctity of his life and character has won for himself the praise of all mankind. And so with the unanimous approval of the Vice-Chancellor, the Doctors, and the Masters of the University, I present to you a man most dear to all the muses. Rabindranath Tagore, already a Nobel prizeman, in order that he may receive the laurel wreath of Oxford also and be admitted to the Degree of Doctor of Literature honoris causa.

CONFERMEN OF DEGREE

Vir venerabilis et doctissimus, musarum sacerdos dilectissime, ego nomine Domini Vice-Chancellarii et auctoritate totius Universitatis admitto te ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris honoris causa.

Venerable and learned Sir, most beloved priest of the Muses, in the name of the Vice-Chancellor and with the authority of the whole University, I admit you to the Degree of Doctor of Letters honoris causa.

REPLY BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE

ADDRESS BY SIR MAURICE GWYER

भवन्त उन्नतोर्विधविद्यालयप्रतिष्ठुः !

एषोऽस्मि कविः कविभारतवर्षस्य ।

तं मां सम्भावयन्ती सा किल अवतां प्रज्ञा विद्याभूमिर्नान्मानसो
मानवधर्माग्रायमेव महान्तमाविष्कृत्योद्भूते कस्य सख्यर्थः साम्प्रत-
मतिवरां गम्भीरवान्गतिपात्वरव संवृत्तः । सर्वोत्तमानं मे चित्तं प्रति-
पद्यास्य वाचिकं प्रतिपत्तिं वृत्तां प्रहित्वा प्रतीकमिवानन्तरं मानव-
धर्मात्मनः । समाजयामि अवतोऽग्रान्तिनिकेतने । वदेत्तद्वचंशु-
पायनानीति अवनिर्गम्य महेशार्थं चिरं तदवस्थासुतेऽस्मद्भूयेषु
सम्पत्त्यन्ते व तद्वचतामस्माकं व साधारणसंस्कृतिसम्पत्त्य इति
प्रतिष्ठन्तु भवन्तः ।

स सख्यर्थं कालः प्रवर्धते यत्रातङ्कः । तिरोक्ते गुणः । प्रसरत्य-
शिष्टं च निरङ्कुशम् । प्रवर्धते च पशुविता स्पृहा भोगे सगुणोयमानो
भूतविषया ।

अस्मिन् हि व्यतिकरे करुणायाम् भुवनव्यापिनः सम्बन्धस्य बोज-
समुद्रमोक्षिणाम् कदाचित् कविजनोचितं प्रतीहत् ।

तथापि तु स यन्मते कालस्तत्तन्वक्ष्यमिदं निन्द्यम् । किञ्च ये नाम
व्यमतीत्याप्येन जीवामः प्रतीमन्व यदावधर्मोच्छ्रमायसम्पत्त्ये वर्धते
नित्यमिति तेस्माभिः सेव्यं प्रतीतिरवश्यं प्रत्यक्षीकरणीया ।

क्लेशं बतेर्दं निमित्तं कल्याण्यनागतस्य समयस्येति प्रतिगृह्यते मयेषा
प्रतिपत्तिर्विद्वतोन्नतोर्विधविद्यालयेन । नूनं न जीविष्याम्यहमव-
लोकयितुमेनं प्रतिष्ठितम् । समाजनीयस्यैव तस्य सप्रणयः सङ्केतः
सङ्ग इव दिवसानां प्रणयतराश्यामिति शिवम् ।

शान्तिनिकेतनम्

रवीन्द्रनाथठाकुरः ।

शाकाब्दा १८६१/१८६२

(TRANSLATION)

Delegates from Oxford University,

In honouring me, an Indian poet, your ancient seat of learning has chosen to express its great tradition of humanity. This tradition, to-day, has acquired a deeper and more pressing significance, I feel proud to accept its message, and the recognition it conveys, as a symbol of the undying spirit of Man. I welcome you here at Santiniketan, and I assure you that this friendly gift that you have brought to me and to my country, will remain in our hearts and bid us stand together for the common cause of civilisation.

In an era of mounting anguish and vanishing worth, when disaster is fast overtaking countries and continents with savagery let loose and brutal thirst for possession augmented by science, it may sound merely poetic to speak of any emerging principle of world-wide relationship. But Time's violence, however immediately threatening, is circumscribed, and we who live beyond it and dwell also in the larger reality of Time, must renew our faith in the perennial growth of civilisation toward an ultimate purpose.

I accept this recognition from Oxford University as a happy augury of an Age to come, and though I shall not live to see it established, let me welcome this friendly gesture as a promise of better days.

Sir, on behalf of the University of Oxford I salute its youngest Doctor, and I deem it a privilege indeed to have taken part in this memorable ceremony, in which the University whose representative I am has, in honouring you, done honour to itself. I shall not fail to convey to the University your gracious words of acceptance, spoken in that ancient tongue, the venerable mother from whom the language of the University's Address and the language which I now speak trace alike their origin.

You Sir, belong to and have adorned a generation which perhaps more than any other in history exalted reason and freedom of thought, but you have ever insisted that to these must be added other virtues, graciousness, simplicity and the love of beauty. And have not Santiniketan and my own University this in common, that each bases its education upon recognition of and respect for human personality? Do they not both attribute pre-eminence to the virtue of tolerance, since none can claim respect for his own personality unless he is willing to respect that of others? These indeed are the foundation of true democracy, which has a spiritual content and is something more than one of many kinds of political mechanism, and its success has been, and will always be, in proportion as those who live under it are conscious of its spiritual and intellectual elements.

But in the present nightmare world the doctrines which you and those who think with you have taught and practised are in deadly peril, and we are witnessing an attempt to assassinate reason, to proscribe tolerance, and to crush the human spirit beneath a monstrous materialism. In this Magian conflict the liberty of the human soul itself is at stake and the conflict must be fought out to the end, if darkness is not to fall once more upon the earth. There is no compromise and there is no truce in that war.

We must not doubt, unless all our most cherished beliefs are a mockery and a cheat, what the final issue will be, though it may not come until after much blood and many tears. But the victory would be barren indeed, if a new generation is not bred and confirmed in that true discipline of mind which alone can create a free and tranquil world. The evil men who are now harrying Europe knew their business well when in the countries they have ravished they singled out for destruction the Universities and ancient seats of learning, the sanctuary and refuge of the humanities. Though war can be waged, as this war is being waged, in defence of a sublime cause, and has power to evoke some of the noblest qualities of mankind, yet in itself it is an accursed thing, and its infection will destroy civilization unless it is itself destroyed. But in the words which Milton puts into the mouth of the apostate Angel,—

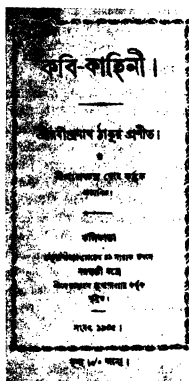
"who overcomes

By force, hath overcome but half his foe", and Apollyon must be met and conquered not on the field of battle alone but also in that kingdom of ideas and of the mind, where it is the teachers and philosophers who can most effectively sustain the cause.

We have watched with dismay even in the years before the war the substitution of emotion for thought and its swift degeneration into blind and often hysterical submission to the will of a leader accountable to none but himself, for unless a political society is invigorated by a multitude of separate springs of thought and action, neither democracy nor any system based upon the freedom of the mind can hope to survive. Is not the clamant need of our day hard intellectual effort and the habit of independent judgment; courage to face realities, and not to deny the existence of problems we are too indolent to solve; reverence for the spirit of an ancient culture, without servility to the past or attempts to

TAGORE'S WORKS—A CHRONOLOGY: 1878-1941

WORKS IN BENGALI



FIRST BOOK
OF
POEMS
Facsimile of the
title page of
'Kabi-Kahini'
published in 1878

1878

Kabi-Kahini ('The Tale of the Poet': a story in verse).

1880

Bana-phul ('The Flower of the Woods': a story in verse).

1881

Valmiki Pratibha ('The Genius of Valmiki': a musical drama); *Bhagna-hridaya* ('The Broken Heart': a drama in verse); *Rudrachanda* (a drama in verse); *Europe-prabasir Patra* ('Letters of a Sojourner in Europe').

1882

Sandhya Sangit ('Evening Songs': a collection of lyrics); *Kal-mrigaya* ('The Fatal Hunt': a musical drama).

1883

Bauthakuranir Hat ('The Young Queen's Market': a novel); *Prabhat Sangeet* ('Morning Songs': a collection of lyrics); *Vividha Prasanga* ('Miscellaneous Topics': a collection of essays).

1884

Chhabi O Gan ('Sketches and Songs': collection of poems); *Prakritir Pratisodh* ('Nature's Revenge': a drama in verse); *Nalini* ('A prose drama'); *Saisab Sangeet* ('Poems of Childhood': a collection of poems); *Bhanu Singha Thakurer Padabalee* (a collection of poems written after Vaishnava poets under the pen-name of 'Bhanu Singha').

1885

Rammohun Roy (a pamphlet on Rammohun Roy); *Alochana* ('Discussions': a collection of essays); *Rubichhaya* ('The shadow of the Sun': a collection of songs).

1886

Kari O Komal ('Sharps and Flats': a collection of poems).

1887

Rajarshi ('The Saint-King': a novel); *Chithipatra* ('Letters').

1888

Samalochana ('Reviews': a collection of essays); *Mayar Khela* (a musical drama).

1889

Raja O Rani ('King and Queen': a drama in verse).

1890

Visarjan ('Sacrifice': a drama); *Mantri Abhisek* (a lecture on Lord Cross's India Bill); *Manasi* ('The Heart's Desire': a collection of poems).

1891

Europe Jatrir Diary ('Diary of a Traveller to Europe'), Part I.

1892

Chitrangada (a drama in verse); *Goray Galad* ('Wrong at the Start': a comedy).

1893

Ganer Bahi O Valmiki Pratibha (a collection of songs incorporating *Valmiki Pratibha*); *Europe Jatrir Diary*, Part II.

1894

Sonar Tari ('The Golden Boat': a collection of poems); *Chhota Galpa* (collection of 15 short stories); *Chitrangada O Viday-Abhisap* ('Chitrangada' previously published).

Our best thanks are due to Mr. Brajendra Nath Banerji, Assistant Editor of the "Modern Review" and "Prabasi" for kindly revising this chronology. Those familiar with his work know how painstaking and accurate he is. It only remains to be added that the musical notations of Tagore's songs and some books edited by him have not been included in this list.

—THE EDITOR.

lished and 'Curse at Farewell'): *Vichitra Galpa*. Parts I & II (collections of short stories); *Katha-Chatustaya* (four short stories).

1895

Chhelay-bhulano Chhada (nursery rhymes, an essay); *Galpa-Dasak* (ten short stories).

1896

Nadi ('River': a long poem); *Chitra* (a collection of poems); *Sanskrita Siksha*, Parts I and II (text-book); *Kabya Granthabali* (collected poems and verse-dramas, incorporating *Malini*, a drama, and *Chaitali*, a collection of poems, which were then issued for the first time).

1897

Vaikunther Khata ('Manuscripts of Vaikuntha': a comedy); *Panchu Bhut* ('Five Elements': a collection of essays).

1899

Kanika ('Chips': a collection of short poems and epigrams).

1900

Katha ('Stories': a collection of ballads); *Brahmaupanishad* (a religious essay); *Kahini* ('Tales': a collection of dramas in verse, and long poems); *Kaipanu* ('Imagination': a collection of poems); *Kshanika* ('The Fleeting One': a collection of poems); *Galpaguchcha*, Part I ('Bunch of Stories': a collection of short stories).

1901

Galpa ('Stories': Part II of *Galpaguchcha*); *Brahma-mantra* (a religious essay); *Naivedya* ('Offerings': a collection of poems); *Aupanishad Brahma* (a religious essay); *Bungla Kriyapader Tuliku* ('List of Bengali Verbs').

1903

Chokher Bali ('Eyesore': a novel); *Kavyagrantha* (collected poems, songs and verse-dramas) edited by Mohit Chandra Sen, Parts I-IX, incorporating *Smaran* ('In Memoriam': poems on the death of his wife) and *Sishu* ('Child-poems'), later issued separately; *Karmaphal* ('Nemesis': a story).

1904

Ingraji Sopan, Part I (a text-book); *Swadeshi Samaj* (an essay); *Rabindra Granthabali* (collected works) published by the "Hitabadi" Office, incorporating *Nashta-neer* ('The Home Spoilt': a novelette), and *Chirakumar Sabha* ('The Bachelors' Club': a novel) later issued separately as *Prajapatir Nirbandha*.

1905

Atmasakti (a collection of political essays and lectures); *Swadesh* (a reprint of the part of Mohit Chandra Sen's *Kavyagrantha* containing 'Sankulpa' and 'Swadesh' with the addition of 'Siraji Utsab', a poem); *Baul* (a collection of songs); *Vijaya Sammilan* (a lecture).

1906

Bhuratvarsha ('India': a collection of political essays and lectures); *Rajbhakti* (a political essay); *Deshnayak* (a political essay); *Ingraji Sopan*, Part II (a text-book); *Kheyu* ('Ferry': a collection of poems); *Naukadubi* ('The Wreck': a novel).

1907

Vichitra Prabandha (a collection of essays); *Charitrapuja* ('Tributes to Great Lives', a collection of essays); *Prachin Sahitya* (a collection of essays); *Lokasahitya* ('Literature of the People': a collection of essays); *Adhunik Sahitya* ('Modern Literature': a collection of essays); *Sahitya* ('Literature': a collection of essays);

Hasya-Kautuk (humorous sketches); *Vyangakautuk* (satirical sketches).

1908

Prajapatir Nirbandha (a novel, issued in 1904 by the "Hitabadi" Office in *Rabindra Granthabali* as *Chirakumar Sabha*); *Sabhapatir Abhishasan* (Presidential Address at the Bengal Provincial Conference at Pabna); *Prahasan* ('Comedies': incorporating *Vaikunther Khata* and *Goray Galad*, separately issued before); *Path-o-Patheya* (an essay); *Raja Praja* ('King and his Subjects': a collection of political essays); *Samuha* (collection of political essays); *Swadesh* ('My Country': a collection of political and sociological essays); *Samaj* ('Society': a collection of essays); *Katha-o-Kahini* (a reprint of the parts *Katha* and *Kahini* of Mohit Chandra Sen's *Kavyagrantha*); *Gan* (a collection of songs, published by Jogindranath Sarkar); *Saradotsav* ('Autumn Festival': a drama); *Siksha* ('Education': a collection of essays); *Mukut* ('The Crown': a prose drama).

1909

Brahma-Sangit (a collection of religious songs); *Santiniketan* (sermons delivered at Santiniketan) Parts I-VIII; *Dharma* ('Religion': a collection of essays); *Sabdatatwa* (a collection of papers on Bengali philology); *Chayanika* (an anthology of poems); *Gan* (a collection of songs, published by the Indian Press, Allahabad); *Ingraji Path* (a text-book); *Chhutir Para* (a selection from his writings for the use of students); *Prayashchitta* ('Penance': a drama); *Vidyasagar-charit* (two essays on Vidyasagar printed before in *Charitrapuja*); *Sishu* (a reprint of the part of Mohit Chandra Sen's *Kavyagrantha* of the same name); *Ingraji Sruti Siksha* (a reprint with additions of the introductory portion of *Ingraji Sopan*, Part I previously published).

1910

Raja ('King of the Dark Chamber': a drama); *Brahma-Sangit* (a collection of religious songs); *Santiniketan*, Parts IX-XI, *Gora*, Parts I and II (a novel); *Gitanjali* ('Song Offerings').



From a pencil-drawing by G. N. Tagore in 1914

1911

Santiniketan, Parts XII-XIII, *Atth Galpa* ('Eight Stories')

1912

Dakghar ('Post Office' a drama), *Dharmasiksha* (an essay) *Dharmer Adhikar* (an essay), *Galpa Chariti* ('Four Stories'), *Malini* (a verse-drama, issued before in 1896 in *Kavyagranthabali*), *Chaitali* (a collection of poems issued before in 1896 in *Kavyagranthabali*) *Vidaya-Abhisap* ('Curse at Farewell', issued before with *Chitrangada* second edition, in 1894), *Patha-sanchaya* (a text-book), *Jiban-Smriti* ('Reminiscences'), *Chhinnapatra* ('Torn Letters'), *Achalayatan* (a drama)

1914

Smaran ('In Memoriam', issued before in *Kavyagrantha*, edited by Mohit Chandra Sen) *Utsarga* ('Dedication', a collection of poems, most of them reprints from *Kavyagrantha* edited by Mohit Chandra Sen) *Gitaliya* (A garland of Songs'), *Gan* (a collection of songs), *Gitali* (a collection of poems and songs) *Gitanjali* (the originals of poems of the English 'Gitanjali' printed in Devanagari) *Dharma Sangit* (a collection of religious songs)

1915

Santiniketan Part XIV, *Bichitra Path* (selections for the use of students) *Kavyagrantha* (an edition de luxe in two different styles of poems and dramas in ten volumes completed in 1916)

1916

Santiniketan Parts XV-XVII *Phalguni* ('Cyclic of Spring' a drama), *Ghare-baire* (Home and the World a novel) *Sanchaya* (a collection of essays) *Panchaya* (a collection of essays), *Balaka* ('The Swan a collection of poems) *Chaturanga* (a novel) *Galpa-saptak* ('Seven Stories')

1917

Kartar Ichchhay Karma ('As the Master Wills a lecture) *Anuvad-charcha* (a text-book)

1918

Guru (stage version of *Achalayatan*) *Palataka* ('The Run-away' stories in verse)

1919

Japan-jatri ('Travels in Japan')

1920

Paala Number (a short story), *Arupratan* (stage version of *Raja*)

1921

Sikshar Milan ('Meeting of Cultures a lecture) *Barsa-mangal* ('Rain-Festival') *Rinsodh* (stage version of *Saradotsav*) *Satyer Abhwan* ('Call of Truth a lecture)

1922

Muktdhara ('Free Current a drama) *Barsa-mangal* ('Rain Festival') *Lipika* ('Letter prose-poems) *Sisu Bholanath* (Child-poems)

1923

Vasanta ('Spring' a musical drama)

1925

Purani (a collection of poems), *Barsa-mangal* ('Rain Festival') *Sesh Barshan* ('The Last Shower', a musical drama), *Griha-prabesh* (a drama); *Sankalan* (selections from prose writings)

1926

Acharjer Abhibhashan (address at Visva-Bharati Parisad, 1925), *Prabahini* (a collection of songs), *Chirakumar*

সমগ্র শ্রী

শ্রীকর্তার আবাহন
গান
নিউলি-কোটা দুইদশে দেই
কিতর যনে
এসে যে দেই নুত কলে
ভাই পোলেব শ্রুতির ভালা
হুবেব হুবে বান বান
গানি যনে যনে
শুভ কলে।
বিশেষ কোলাহলে
ভালা যে সে উঠিবে জ্বল-কলে।
হাতের ভালা উঠে যে যবে
হুবেব হালা বান হালা
কখন কোয়ার সঙ্গে
যনে যনে।

শ্রীকর্তার হস্তে কৈলোমো কঠিন
আমারো হস্তে বান
নিউলি-কোটা দুইদশে দেই
কিতর যনে
এসে যে দেই নুত কলে
ভাই পোলেব শ্রুতির ভালা
হুবেব হুবে বান বান
গানি যনে যনে
শুভ কলে।
বিশেষ কোলাহলে
ভালা যে সে উঠিবে জ্বল-কলে।
হাতের ভালা উঠে যে যবে
হুবেব হালা বান হালা
কখন কোয়ার সঙ্গে
যনে যনে।

Facsimile of a song in *Nalaya* as collected by the Poet when it appeared in the now-defunct monthly *Vichitra* in June 1927

Sabha (stage version of *Prajapatis Nirbandha*) *Sodh Bodh* ('All Square' a comedy), *Natir Puja* ('The Dancing Girl's Worship a drama), *Ritu Utsav* (a collection of plays on Seasonal Festivals comprising *Sesh Barshan Saradotsav Vasanta Sundara and Phalguni Rakta Karabi* ('Red Oleanders' a drama) *Lekhan* ('Autographs' verses, with English translations, printed in facsimile of the Poet's hand-writing in Berlin)

1927

Ritu Ranga ('The Play of the Seasons a musical drama)

1928

Palliprakriti (address at the anniversary of *Sriniketan*), *Sesh Raksha* (stage version of *Goray-Galad*)

1929

Samabayanti (address at Co-operative Conference), *Jatri* ('Traveller' letters from abroad), *Paritrin* (stage version of *Prayashchitta*), *Jogajog* (a novel), *Tapati* (a drama) *Shesher Kabitu* ('Last Poem', a novel), *Mahua* (poems)

1930

Ingreji Sahaj Siksha Parts I and II (text-book), *Sahaj Path* Parts I and II (text-book), *Patha Prachaya* Parts II—IV (text-book), *Bhanu Sinher Patravali* (Letters)



A photo-portrait taken in 1931

1938

Prantik (poem-) *Chundalka Nrityanatya* (a dance drama) *Pathi* (O pather pranti (letters from abroad) *Sanjati* ('Offerings of evening poems) *Patradhara* (reprint of Chinnapatra Bhanusinger Patravali and *Pathi o pather prante* in one volume) *Abhibhashan* (a lecture on the opening of the Santiniketan Silpabhandar) *Bongla Bhasha Parichaya* (Treatise on the Bengali Language)

1939

Prahashinee (The Smiling One poems) *Nritya-natya Chundalka* (a reprint of the dance-drama previously issued, with notations) *Akash-pradip* (poems) *Pather Sanchaya* (Letters from Abroad) *Shyama* (a dance drama) *Mahajati Sadan* (address at the Laying of the Foundation stone of Mahajati Sadan) *Rabindranachanabali* Part I (a new edition of the complete Bengali works inclusive of hitherto unpublished writings) *Rabindranathar Ban* (address at Vidyasagar Smriti-Mandir Midnapore) *Proshad* (two articles on Proshad a son of Ramananda Chatterjee) *Antardibatu* (address at Santiniketan anniversary)

1940

Rabindra-rachanabali Parts II & V *Nabajatak* (The Newly Born' poems) *Sana* (The Pipe poems) *Chitrakopi* (Album of paintings with explanatory verses) *Chile bela* ('My Boyhood Days' reminiscences) *Rabindra-rachanabali Achatita-sangraha* Part I (reprint of works of the Poet which had been withdrawn from circulation) *Tin Sangi* ('Three Companions' Short Stories) *Rog-sayaya* ('In the sick-bed poems) *Arogya* (an essay)

1941

Rabindra-rachanabali Parts VI and VII, *Arogya* ('Recovery poems) *Janmadine* ('Birthday' poems) *Sabhyatar Sankat* ('Crisis in Civilisation' an essay), *Galpa-salpa* (stories and verses for children), *Asramar rup o bikash* (a reprint of two old essays on the ideals of Santiniketan)

গল্পসল্প

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর

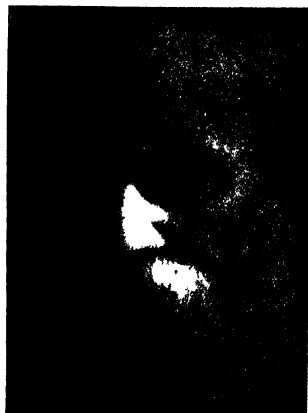


কল্যাণী
২২/৯
বীন্দ্রনাথ
২৫ই মে ১৯৪১
২০/৪

বিশ্বভারতী গ্রন্থালয়

২১০ কর্নওয়ালিস স্ট্রীট, কলিকাতা

A facsimile of the title page of the last of the Poet's works published in his life time, *Galpa-salpa*. It appeared on his eighty-first birthday on 25th Basant Poo 1348 (May 8 1941). No more of his works are announced to be published soon by Visva Bharati Publishing Department.



A photo-portrait by S. Saha taken in 1937

WORKS IN ENGLISH

1912

GITANJALI (Song-offerings)

A collection of Poems Translations made by the author from the original Bengali With an Introduction by W B Yeats (1865-1940) and a Portrait by W Rothenstein (Dedicated to W Rothenstein) First limited edition issued by the India Society of London November 1912 First published by Macmillan & Co March 1913 103 Poems translated from his Bengali Poetical works *Gitanjali* 51 pieces *Gitmalya* 17 *Navedya* 16 *Kheya* 11 *Sisu* 3 *Chaitali* *Smarana* *Kalpna* *Utsarga* *Achalavatana* 1 each

1913

THE GARDENER Poems

Translated by the author from the original Dedicated to W B Yeats Macmillan & Co October 1913 Pp 150

There is no Bengali book of this name the name has obviously been suggested from the first poem translated from *Kshanika* 25 *Kalpna* 16 *Sonara Tari* 9 *Chaitali* 16 *Utsarga* 6 *Chitra* 5 *Manasi* 3 *Mayar Khula* 3 *Kheya* 2 *Kari O Komal* *Gituli* and *Saradotsava* 1 each

THE CRISCENT MOON Child-Poems

Translated from the original Bengali by the author With 8 illustrations in colour (by Abanindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose Asit Haldar Surendranath Ganguli) Dedicated to T Sturge Moore Macmillan & Co November 1913 Pp 92

Forty poems most of the poems are from *Sisu* (the Child) *Kadi O Komal* 4 *Sonara Tari* *Gitmalya* 1 each

CHITRA A drama

Macmillan & Co, 1913 Dedicated to Mrs W Vaughan Mody (U S A) The book was first published by the India Society London (Translation of *Chitrangada* 1891)

GLIMPSES OF BENGALI LIFE

Short stories translated by Rajani Ranjan Sen G A Natesan and Co, Madras June 1913 Pp 240

1914

THE KING OF THE DARK CHAMBER A drama

Translated by Kshitish Chandra Sen, 1 c s, from *Raja* (1910)—Macmillan & Co, 1914.

THE POST OFFICE A drama

Translated by Devabrata Mukherji from *Dakghar* (1912) With a preface by W B Yeats First printed at the Cuala Press, Dundrum 1914 Macmillan & Co, March, 1914

SADHANA The Realisation of Life Essays

Dedicated to Ernest Rhys Macmillan & Co 1914 Lectures delivered at Harvard University U S A in 1912-13

1 The Relation of the Individual to the Universe
2 Soul-consciousness 3 The Problem of Evil 4 The Problem of Soul 5 Realisation in Love 6 Realisation in Action (Translation of *Karma-Yoga* by Surendranath Tagore) 7 The Realisation of Beauty 8 The Realisation of the Infinite

ONE HUNDRED POEMS OF KABIR

Translated by the author assisted by Evelyn Underhill with an introduction by her Published by the India Society London 1914 (750 copies of the Edition were printed) Macmillan & Co 1915

(Kabir's original Hindi text in Bengali script was edited with Bengali translation by Kshitimohan Sen of Santiniketan Tagore's translation followed this text and translation)

1915

THE MAHARAJ OF ALAKA A drama

A romantic comedy in one Act founded on the story of Sir Rabinindranath Tagore by George Calderon Illustrated by Clarissa Miles Photographs specially taken by Walter Bemington together with character sketch of Sir Rabinindranath Tagore (by Ramnanda Chatterjee, Ananda K Coomaraswamy, Rev C F Andrews W B Yeats) Compiled by Kedar Nath Das Gupta Published by Francis Griffiths 34 Maiden Lane Strand W C London 1915 Pp 64 (Based on the short story *Dalva* 1892)

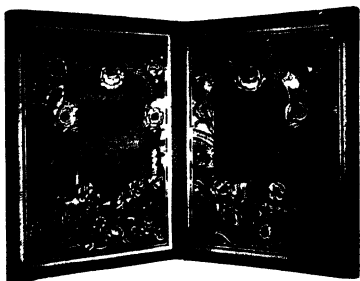
Note A rhymed English poem set to tune was composed for this Drama in 1912 when it was staged in London It is given below

The bee is to come and the bee is to hum
Till the heart of the flower comes out
The bud says yea and the bud says nay
She sways with a fear and a doubt

My life when young was like a flower, — a flower that loosens a petal or two from her abundance to give them away and never feel the loss when the spring breeze woo's her with insistent whispers.

Now at the end of her youth my life is like a fruit, having nothing to spare and waiting to offer herself completely with her full bar.

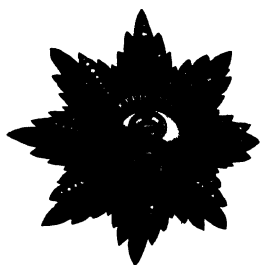
The World's Gifts



THE NOBEL PRIZE DIPLOMA



THE NOBEL PRIZE MEDAL



The star and badge of the order of the redeemer conferred by the King of Greece



This is one of the six portraits of the Poet done in pencil by William Rothenstein in London in 1912. One of these was reproduced as frontispiece to the India Society Edition of *Gitanjali* while the one above of the Poet singing was reproduced as frontispiece to H. Fox Strangways' *Musical Hindustan*.

GITANJALI

(SONG OFFERINGS)

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

A COLLECTION OF POETIC TRANSLATIONS MADE
BY THE AUTHOR FROM THE
ORIGINAL BENGALI

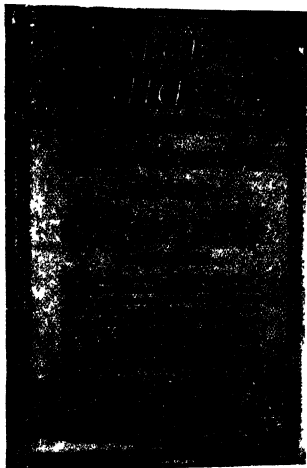
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
W. B. YEATS

LONDON

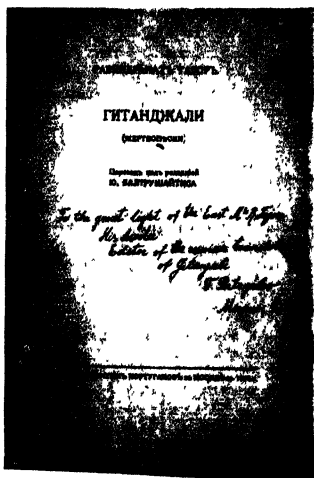
PRINTED AT THE CHISWICK PRESS FOR
THE INDIA SOCIETY

1912

Facsimile of the title page of Gitanjali, the Poet's first English work—published in London in 1912 by the India Society in a limited edition of 750 copies of which 250 copies went to the



THE GERMAN TRANSLATION OF "GITANJALI"



THE RUSSIAN TRANSLATION OF "GITANJALI"

Tagore's English works have been translated into almost every language of the world. Millions of copies of German and Russian translations of *Gitanjali* have been sold—those two countries not at all

O errant of wayward wings,
O guest of the sumptuous summer,
Give up thy hope, yet keep up thy heart,
O sunny day's newcomer '
Whisper in tearful tunes, untired
And wait with a faith devout
For the bud says 'yea', and the bud says 'nay'.
She waits with a fear and a doubt

1916

FRUIT GATHERING: Poems

Macmillan & Co., October, 1916 (Poems translated from *Gitali* 16, *Gittimalya* 15, *Balaka* 14, *Utsarga* 8, *Katha* 6, *Kheya* 5, *Smarana* 5, *Chitra* 2, *Narvedya* 2, *Dharma-Sangit* 3, *Kalpana* *Gitanjali* *Rupa* *Manasi* *Kadi* 1) *Komal* *Achalayatana* 1 each)

HUNGRY STONES AND OTHER STORIES

Macmillan & Co., 1916 1 The Hungry Stones (*Khudita Pashuna* 1495) 2 Victory (*Jaya-Parajaya*-1892) 3 Once there was a King (*Asambhava Katha* 1893) 4 Lord, the Baby (*Khoka Pratyubartana* 1891) 5 The Kingdom of Cards (*Ekti Ashadi Gulpu* 1892) 6 Devotee (*Boshtami* 1914) 7 Vision (*Drishtidana* 1898) 8 Babus of Nayanjore (*Thakurda*-1895) 9 Living or Dead (*Ivita O Mrita*-1892) 10 We crown thee king (*Rajika* 1898) 11 Renunciation (*Tvaga* 1892) 12 Kabuliwallah (*Kabuliwallah* 1892)

STRAY BIRDS Epigrams

Macmillan & Co New York, 1916 Frontispiece in colour by Willy Pogany Dedicated to T Hara of Yokohama, Japan

1917

THE CYCLE OF SPRING A drama

Translation of the *Phalguni*, 1916 Macmillan, Feb. 1917 Dedicated to the Boys of Santiniketan and to Dinendranath Tagore "who is guide of these boys in their festivals and treasure-house of all my songs"

MY REMINISCENCES

Translation of *Ivan Smriti*-1912 Macmillan, 1917

SACRIFICE and other Plays

Macmillan, 1917 1 Sannyasi or the Ascetic (*Prakritr Pratishodha*-1884) 2 Malini (1896) 3 Sacrifice (*Visvarjan*-1890) 4. The King and the Queen (*Raja O Rani*-1889) N B The translations are all abridged

PERSONALITY Essays

Lectures delivered in America (1916).-Macmillan, 1917 Dedicated to C. F Andrews 1 What is Art. 2 The World of Personality. 3. The Second Birth 4 My School. 5. Meditation 6. Women

NATIONALISM: Essays

Macmillan & Co. New York, September, 1917. Dedicated to C F Andrews 1 Nationalism in the West (Read in the U S. A during the winter of 1916-17) 2 Nationalism in Japan (Read at the Imperial University of Tokyo and the Keio Gijuku University in June-July, 1916) 3 Nationalism in India (Written in U S A.) 4 The Sunset of the Century (Translation of a poem written on the last day of the Bengali year 1305 April, 1899) These essays were translated into French by Romain Rolland

Where is the market for you my songs?
Is it there where the balad makes the
measured verse, measured whether the oil
is upon the cask, or the cask upon the
oak?
from yellow pages upon
wandering days?
my song murmurs in my ears
oh, no, no, no

Where is the place
Is it there where the man of fortune
sits in his marble palace, and his looks
upon the shelves are numberless - my
songs in leather and painted in gold, dusted
by slaves, their virgin pages unmarked?

my song is
where is the place Is it there where the young
with his head bent upon the books
with his mind straying in the dream-land
of youth, where the school is too much in
conscience and the poetry is hidden in
the heart, there among the disorders of
things do you care to play hide & seek
my song remains silent in
hesitation

Where is it Is it there where the bride
is busy in the house - where she runs
to her bottom, the moment she is free and
snatches from under her pillow
the book of romance so roughly handled
by the hand of the baby, so full of the faint puff
of her hair, my song leaves a sigh &
trembles with desire.

Where is it Is it there where
the pair of lovers seeks shelter from
carnal eyes, where birds not yet
never, no, no, where streaming babbling
fingers full meaning, where the
scent of things of the world shaver
then music upon the fluttering heart;
My song bursts out & says
yes, yes.

MISS of the English translation of the Bengali
poem কোমল হাতে তুই বিকতে চাস গুরে আবার গান in
'Komal' (1900)

By courtesy Nalinikanta Sarkar

SELECTED PASSAGES FOR BENGALI TRANSLATION. From English into Bengali.

1918

GITANJALI AND FRUIT-GATHERING: Poems.

With illustrations by Nandalal Bose, Surendranath Kar, Abanindranath Tagore, Nabendranath Tagore.-The Macmillan & Co., New York; September, 1918.

LOVER'S GIFT AND CROSSING: Poems.

Macmillan & Co., 1918. Translations from *Balaka* 14, *Kshanika* 14; *Kheya* 10, *Gitanjali* 8, *Gittimalya* 8, *Naivedya* and *Utsarga* 7 each; *Chitra* 5, *Smaran*, *Gitali*, *Chaitali* and *Kalpana* 4 each. *Manasi* and *Prayashchitta* 2 each. *Achalayatana* 3, *Kadi* 0 *Komal* and *Kahini* 1 each about 9 from *Dharma Sangita*

MASHI AND OTHER STORIES

Macmillan & Co., 1918 1. Mashi (*Sesher Ratri*, The Last Night, 1914). 2. Skeleton (*Kankal*, 1892). 3. The Auspicious Vision (*Subhadrishti*, 1900). 4. The



1913

From a Photo taken
in Calcutta



1926

From a Photo taken
in Milan

From
Eight Portraits

Engraved & Printed by
Bharat Phototype Studio

Supreme Night (*Eka Ratri*, 1892). 5. Raja and Rani (*Sadar O Andar*, 1900). 6. The Trust Property (*Sampatti Samarpana*, 1891). 7. The Riddle Solved (*Samasya Pura*, 1893). 3. The Elder Sister (*Didi*, 1895). 9. Subha (*Subha*, 1893). 10. The Post Master (1891). 11. The River Stairs (*Ghater Katha*, 1894). 12. The Castaway (*Apad*, 1895). 13. Saved (*Uddhara*, 1900). 14. My Fair Neighbour (*Pratibeshini*, 1896).

STORIES FROM TAGORE

Macmillan & Co., New York; October, 1918. 1. The Cubliwallah (see "Hungry Stones"). 2. The Home-Coming (*Chhuti*, 1893). 3. Once There was a King (see "Hungry Stones"). 4. Master Mashai (1907). 5. Subha (see *Mashi*). 6. The Post Master (see *Mashi*). 7. The Castaway (see *Mashi*). 8. The Son of Rashmani (*Rashmonir Chhele*, 1911). 9. The Babus of Nayanjor (see "Hungry Stones").

THE PARROT'S TRAINING: A satire.

Thacker Spink & Co., Calcutta, 1918. Illustrations by Abanindranath Tagore. (Translation of *Totakahini*, published in "Sabuj Patra", 1918;—see *Lipika*, 1922).

1919

THE CENTRE OF INDIAN CULTURE: Essay.

With vignettes by Nandalal Bose. Published by the Society for the Promotion of National Education, Adyar, Madras, 1919.

THE HOME AND THE WORLD: A novel.

Macmillan & Co., 1919. (Translation of *Ghare-Baire*, by Surendranath Tagore).

THE TRIAL OF THE HORSE: Pp. 7, i4 August

1921

GREATER INDIA: Essays.

S. Ganesan, Madras, 1921.—1. Our Swadeshi Samaj (1904-05). 2. The Way to get it Done (1905-06). 3. The One Nationalist Party (1908). 4. East and West in Greater India (1909-10).

THE WRECK: A Novel.

Macmillan & Co., 1921. Translation of the novel *Nauka Dubi* or the Sinking of a Boat—published, 1906.

POEMS FROM TAGORE.

With an introduction by C. F. Andrews.—Macmillan & Co., pp. 117. Printed at Hare Press, Calcutta.

GLIMPSES OF BENGAL: Letters.

Macmillan & Co., 1921. Selected from Letters, 1885-1895 (Translation of *Chhinna Patra* by Surendranath Tagore. "Modern Review", 1917).

THOUGHT RELICS.

Macmillan & Co., New York, 1921. Pp. 112. Thoughts selected from various writings already published.

THE FUGITIVE: Poems.

Macmillan & Co., New York, 1921. Dedicated to W. W. Pearson. Translations from *Lipika* about 20. *Manasi*, *Sonar Tari*, *Chaitali* 7 each; *Chitra* 5; *Kshanika*, *Kahini*, *Palataka* 4 each; *Utsarga*, *Balaka* 3 each; *Kazi O Komal*, *Smarana* 2 each; *Kheya*, *Gutimalya*, and *Katha* 1 each).

Kacha and Devayani (Translation: *Vidaya Abhisap*, 1893). Ama and Vinayaka (Translation: *Sati*, 1897). The Mother's Prayer (Translation: *Gandharir Abedana*, 1897). Somaka and Ritvik (Translation: *Narakvasa*, 1897). Karna and Kunti (Translation: *Karna Kunti Samvada*, 1900).

W

Translations from Vaishnava songs, Baul songs, Hindi songs of Jnanadas.

1922

CREATIVE UNITY: Essays.

Macmillan & Co., 1922. Dedicated to Dr. Edwin H. Legis. Essays: 1. The Poet's Religion. 2. The Creative Ideal. 3. The Religion of the Forest (*Tapovana*). 4. An Indian Folk Religion. 5. East and West. 6. The Modern Age. 7. The Spirit of Freedom. 8. The Nation. 9. Woman and Home. 10. An Eastern University.

1924

LETTERS FROM ABROAD: Letters.

Ganesan, Madras—1924. Letters of Tagore written principally to C. F. Andrews from Europe during the Non-co-operation days of 1921-22.

GORA: A Novel.

Macmillan & Co., 1924. Translation of *Gora*, a novel, by W. W. Pearson ("Modern Review"—1923).

THE CURSE AT FAREWELL: A Drama.

Translation of *Vidaya-Ahhisapu* (1893) in verse by E. J. Thompson—1924.

1925

TALKS IN CHINA: Essays.

Visvabharati Bookshop, Calcutta February—1925. Reports of Lectures delivered in China in April and May, 1924. Dedicated "To my friend Susima (Tse-mou-Hsu) to whose kind office I owe my introduction to the Great people in China".—Introduction by Liang Chi Chao, President, Universities Association, Peking. (Published by P(rasanta) C(handra) Mahalanobis).

POEMS:

About 22 poems translated by E. J. Thompson in Benn's Augustan Books of Modern Poetry.

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Translation of *Rakta Karabi*—an allegorical drama.

BROKEN TIES AND OTHER STORIES.

Macmillan & Co., 1925: Broken Ties (*Chaturanga*, 1916); Other Stories: In the Night (*Nisithe*, 1895); The Fugitive Gold (*Svarna Mriga*, 1892); Giribala (*Megh O Raudra*); The Lost Jewels (*Manihara*, 1898); Emancipation (from *Parisodh*—a poem).

1926

THE MEANING OF ART:

Dacca University Bulletin No. XII. Oxford University Press. Pp. 15.

1928

FIREFLIES.

Macmillan & Co., New York, February, 1928. Decorated by Boris Artyzbasheff.

Author's Note: "Fireflies had their origin in China and Japan where thoughts were very often claimed from me in handwriting on fans and pieces of silk."

LETTERS TO A FRIEND: Letters.

George Allen & Unwin, 1928. Edited with two Introductory Essays by C. F. Andrews. Dedicated to the memory of W. Winstanley Pearson. (Revised edition of *Letters from Abroad*, 1924).

THE TAGORE BIRTHDAY BOOK

Macmillan & Co 1928 Selected from the English Works of Rabindranath Tagore Edited by C F Andrews (With 4 illustrations)

LECTURES AND ADDRESSES

Macmillan & Co., 1928 Edited by Prof Anthony X Soares of Baroda College 1 My Life (Talks in China 1925) 2 My School (Personality, 1917) 3 Civilization and Progress (Talks in China, 1925) 4 Construction vs Creation 5 What is Art (Personality 1917) 6 Nationalism in India (Nationalism, 1917) 7 International Relations 8 The Voice of Humanity 9 Realisation of the Infinite (*Sadhana* 1914)

A POET'S SCHOOL

Visva-Bharati Bulletin No 9 December 1928 Pp 39

1929

THOUGHTS FROM TAGORE

Macmillan & Co 1929 Edited by C F Andrews (with 4 portraits)

ON ORIENTAL CULTURE AND JAPAN'S MISSION

A lecture delivered to the members of the Indo Japanese Association at the Industrial Club Tokyo May 15, 1929 Published by the Indo-Japanese Association, Tokyo, 1929 Pp 28

1930

THE RELIGION OF MAN

Essays

George Allen & Unwin, 1930 The Hibbert Lectures for 1930 Dedicated to Dorothy Elmhurst

Contents (1) Man's Universe (2) The Creative Spirit (3) The Surplus in Man (4) Spiritual Union (5) The Prophet (6) The Vision (7) The Man of My Heart, (8) The Music Maker (9) The Artist (10) Man's Nature (11) The Meeting (12) The Teacher, (13) Spiritual Freedom (14) The Four Stages of Life (15) Conclusion

Appendix—(1) The Baul-singers of Bengal by Kshitimohan Sen (2) Note on the Nature of Reality (a conversation between Tagore and Einstein on July 14 1930), (3) Dadu and the Mystery of Form (from an article in the Visva-Bharati Quarterly by Prof Kshitimohan Sen), (4) Night and Day (an address in the Chapel of Manchester College Oxford May 25 1930)

1931

THE CHILD A Prose-Poem

George Allen & Unwin 1931 Written directly in English Later rendered into Bengali as *Sisutirha* Re-translated into English from the Bengali by Bhabani Phitichirvi in The Golden Boat 1932

1932

THE GOLDEN BOAT Poems

George Allen & Unwin 1932 Translated by Bhabani Bhattacharya Pp 121 (33 poems from various works of Tagore)

MAHATMAJI AND THE DEPRESSED HUMANITY

Visva-Bharati December 1932 Written during Gandhi's fast in Yeravada Jail Dedicated to Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray in appreciation of his self-sacrifice for his country and students

SHEAVES POEMS AND SONGS

Macmillan & Co 1932 Translated by Nagendranath Gupta Pp 132

1933

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS by Rabindranath Tagore Rammohun Roy Centenary, 18th Feb., 1933, pp 4

1934

MY IDEALS WITH REGARD TO THE SREE BHABANI July 1934, pp 6

1935

EAST AND WEST Essays

An exchange of letters between Gilbert Murray and Rabindranath Tagore International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, Paris, 1935

TWENTY-SIX SONGS OF TAGORE

Notations by Arnold A Bake with an introduction by Arnold A Bake and Philippe Stern together with a literal translation from the original poems and the free translation of the same by the Poet, Paris, 1935

1936

EDUCATION NATURALIZED

English translation by Surendranath Tagore of a lecture delivered under the auspices of the New Education Fellowship held in the Education Week at the Senate Hall, Calcutta—February, 1936—Printed at the Santiniketan Press

AN ADDRESS

At a Conference held in Calcutta on 15th July 1936 to discuss the Communal Award

COLLECTED POEMS AND PLAYS OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Macmillan & Co Limited, London 1936 Pp 578 1937

MAN a lecture

Andhra University Series No 16

CHINA AND INDIA

Address at the opening of Cheena-Bhavana at Santiniketan

RELIGION OF THE SPIRIT AND SECTARIANISM

Address at Sri Ramkrishna Centenary Parliament of Religions 3rd March 1937, Pp 9

1940

MY BOYHOOD DAYS

Translation of *Chhelebeta* by Marjorie Sykes Visva Bharati 1941

A PICTURE OF SANTINIKETAN*

The scenery and sights the sounds and songs the aroma and the atmosphere of Santiniketan permeate this book of 106 pages by one of the "arrived" poets and litterateurs of Bengal. The cultured quiet and contentment of the place we can almost visualise through his eyes. Buddhadev Bose has painted his words with the brush of an artist. The strange transformation from a shimmering waste to a haven of peace and repose that the Maharshi created, and the great centre of culture founded by his son the Poet where the East and the West have met in fulfilment are not easy to describe—far less so to catch its spirit and convey it in written words. In this difficult and delicate task the author has succeeded in an appreciable measure. What however is more valuable is the pen-portrait of the Poet in his declining days and the record of some illuminating conversations the author had had with him (May-June 1941). This lends a melancholy interest to the book, which we commend to our readers. We should add that the article on "The Last Days of Rabindranath" in this issue is based on this book.

A word at the end may not, we hope, be taken amiss. There is a little too much of the personal and domestic affairs of the author, which intrusion if left out, would have made it more pleasant reading.

A H

* SAR PRADESHI DEBEE—By Buddhadev Bose. Published from Kabita Bhavan, 262, Rashbehari Avenue, Calcutta—August, 1941 Price Re 1/8

১৯৭৮ সাল
১৯৭৮ সাল

১৯/৭/১৯৬৩
 তোমার সন্তান সত্যজিৎ মজুমদার
 আনন্দবাবু স্যারী স্যারী লিখে যাওয়ায় এ, তুমি
 লিখিত হয় আমার মাথা। মাঝে মাঝে
 লিখে আসবে হয় (যদি তুমি চাও)। আমার মাথা
 এত উজ্জ্বল হয়। (তোমার মাঝে তুমি আমারই মত
 হয়ে গেল।) তাই লিখিত তোমার লেখা সত্যি এ
 তোমার মাথাখানি সত্যি তোমার মাথা। (আমার
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 যা সত্যি মনে হয় এমনি সত্যি সত্যি সত্যি
 এ-মাঝে সত্যি সত্যি করে।) (তুমি এত সত্যি) ১৯৬৩

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"UTTARAYAN"
SANTINIKETAN, BENGAL.

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 અમારા, ભાગ્ય
 મુજબ અમારા ભાગ્યને લેવામાં
 આવેલા કોઈની આત્માના જીવન
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 દુષ્ટીથી જ એ મરીને પૂર્ણ
 થઈ શકે છે। અમારો જીવન
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"UTTARAYAN"
SANTINIKETAN, BENGAL
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কলকাতা

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1940
April 27

1940
May 16

THE POET WANTS A STREET-NUMBER

A Letter From Rabindranath Tagore

SOME years ago the Poet was out to find a street-number in Calcutta, but he failed. The system of numbering, or rather, as he put it, the lack of it, baffled him. In the letter below— which he sent to the Fourth Anniversary Number of the *Calcutta Municipal Gazette* (November, 1928), he put forward a suggestion "for consideration by our City Fathers", which, he believed, would assist both citizens and strangers to the city "uninitiated into the mysteries of street-planning." At least one of his suggestions has since been given effect to.

SANTINIKETAN,
8th November, 1928

(which, certainly, is a matter for momentous consideration).

point out whether the street or lane is on the right or the left.

My Dear Amal,

I am glad that you asked me for a few lines for the Anniversary Number of the *Municipal Gazette*. Your kind invitation has given me an opportunity of putting forward a suggestion for consideration by our City Fathers.

I had the misfortune some time ago to try to discover a house with a street-number, which, doubtless for some excellent municipal reason, was occult for a mere citizen like myself. After many journeyings, up and down the road, in desperation I turned for help to a Policeman; I had forgotten that we are unique in the world in the matter of our Police force; for, though in other lands the Policeman may have grey matter in the brain, our national brand has merely red material on the head, perhaps more decorative, but undoubtedly not quite so useful. The hiatus in the numbering of the houses was apparently unnoticed by even the people in the locality, for, when appealed to, they could make merely large and inutile gestures.

The present system of numbering houses and planning streets may be a splendid way of training the young generation to become future Livingstones. But the course is, perhaps, too difficult, and I sometimes wonder if Livingstone himself would not have found exploration in Darkest Africa easier than fruitful exploration in the City of Palaces. And, for those of us who have little inclination for exploration, this scheme is extravagant both in time (perhaps a slight matter) and in petrol

It should not be a very difficult task to assist both citizens and strangers to the city, uninitiated into the mysteries of street-planning, in their adventurous undertaking of trying to discover places and houses in Calcutta. The lamp-posts might be easily utilised for hanging from them plates bearing useful information, and I believe that though the quality of illumination emanating at night from many of the city lamp-posts might conveniently be a matter of civic discussion, the utility of these plates pendant from the lamp-posts will be freely recognised by all. It would enable even me to discover a house mystically numbered let us say, 99-1-N, Cornwallis Street.*

I would suggest that an enamelled or painted board should be attached to each lamp-post. On the board should be the following information:—

(a) the number of the houses in the street between the lamp-post and the next lamp-post on either side; an arrow would indicate whether the numbers are in the ascending or in the descending order: e.g.,

48—→56 56—→64

(b) the name of any street or lane opening out of the street and the number of the house from which such street or lanes begins; e.g.,

60, Ram Chandra Dutta Lane.

As there are lamp-posts on either side of the street, it is unnecessary to

(c) the names of all public buildings or important places, lying between lamp-posts, should also be entered; if any private individual or business firm wishes to have his name on the direction-plate, it might be a source of income to the Corporation. It is quite conceivable that many shops or even private individuals may be willing to pay well for the publicity of the plates.

At the place where each important street begins, there may be put up a large board stating prominently the more important streets opening out from the street and also any important public places to be seen along this street. Here again, a considerable revenue may be acquired by permitting business-firms or private individuals to have their names on these boards.

The cost of providing these plates and boards should not be prohibitive; if steps are taken to encourage business-firms to have their names on the plates and boards, the cost would, perhaps, be practically nothing. But in any case the assistance to the public would be so great that any expenditure should be considered a legitimate charge on the municipal revenue. A beginning might be made with the more important of the streets.

Wishing your paper all success,

I am,

Yours sincerely,

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

AMAL HOME, Esq.,

Editor, "Calcutta Municipal Gazette",
Calcutta.

* The residence of the Editor of the *Calcutta Municipal Gazette*.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE and



Dr. Brajendra Nath Seal addressing the inaugural meeting of the Visva-Bharati at Santiniketan, Dec. 22, 1921

॥ यत्र विश्वं भव्यतेक नीदं ॥

Where the whole World finds its Shelter

THE VISVA-BHARATI

By

PRASANTA CHANDRA MAHAPATRO

the place that he pitched his tent under two trees, the only two to be seen there, and spent his time in meditation and prayer. These *Saptaparni* trees are still to be seen at one extremity of the Asrama, with the open plains stretching out before them to the western horizon. On the marble slab which marks the place of his meditation is inscribed in Bengali the text of the Maharshi's meditation

*Ami ātma prāṇe ātma manas
ānanda ātma sānti*

*He is the repose of my life, joy of
my heart, peace of my spirit "*

THE Visva-Bharati was formally founded on the 22nd December, 1921. It was not, however, a new institution; it had grown gradually out of the Santiniketan Asrama, and its formal inauguration was merely the outer expression of an inward development. For a fuller understanding of the ideals of the Visva-Bharati it is, therefore, necessary to look back into the past history of Santiniketan.

The Asrama has become what it is by and through its association with many living personalities. Two among them stand out prominent, Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, the founder of the Santiniketan Asrama, and Rabindranath Tagore, his son and the founder of the Visva-Bharati. Behind them both stands the spirit of Raja Ram Mohun Roy.

The site of the Santiniketan Asrama was originally a bare spot, in the midst

of an open country and was notorious for being the haunt of dacoits. Here Maharshi Debendranath came on one of his journeys, and he was so attracted by

*Visva-Bharati represents India where
she has her wealth of mind which is for all.
Visva-Bharati acknowledges India's obligation
to offer to others the hospitality of her best
culture and India's right to accept from
others their best.*

Rabindranath Tagore

The Maharshi's love for the place of his meditation wrought in it a complete transformation. Rich soil was brought over trees and shrubs planted, and a garden and orchard laid out. A house was built, and later on, a temple. When the place had thus become a thing of beauty Maharshi dedicated it, as an Asrama, to the public under a Trust. Deed endowing it with an annuity of Rs. 6,000, for the use of everyone who wished to meditate on God, free from all antagonism of creed and sect. The only things forbidden were speaking ill of any religious sect, vulgar amusements, and flesh foods.

II

FOR a long time, for nearly 30 years there was very little activity in Santiniketan. The temple was devoid of worshippers, only a paid minister kept up a formal daily service. Visitors were few and far between. Maharshi knew quite well that nothing was being done there, and yet he never grew impatient and never hid any doubts about its future.

Thirty years later when Rabindranath thought of founding a boarding school at Santiniketan he immediately received the warm approval of his father. The *Vidyalyaya* (school) was started on the 7th Pous 1309 Bengali era (December 1901). Rabindranath's immediate object was to found a school where the children would live a happy life and have as much freedom as possible, where study would not be divorced from life, where the inmates would participate in one communal life and live in harmony with the surroundings of nature. But the underlying ideals reached far deeper.

The forest homes of ancient India always had a special appeal to his mind. The 'Message of the Forest' occurred again and again almost like a refrain throughout the Poet's writing in verse and prose.

The forest unlike the desert or rock or sea is living. It gives shelter and nourishment to life. In such surroundings the ancient forest dwellers of India realized the spirit of harmony with the universe and emphasized in their minds the monastic aspect of truth. They sought the realisation of their soul through union with all.

The two chief sources of his inspiration, the *Upanishads* and the classical themes of Kalidasa, both had their setting in a background of the ancient forest homes of India. *Tapovana* was

Rabindranath's heritage from ancient India.

'Our ideal institution will be situated under the shadow of trees in the open country far from the turmoil of cities. The teachers will carry on their own studies and teach, and the students will learn and grow up in an atmosphere of peace and quietness. If possible, gardens and farm lands will be attached to the *Vidyalyaya*. The pupils will help in the farming operations in looking after the cattle and in milking cows. In their leisure hour they will dig the soil, plant trees and water them. Classes will be held under the trees, and boys will learn roaming over the field with their teacher. In this way an intimate contact with nature will be established not merely through the emotions but also through work and toil.'

Let us not forget that another ideal was also working in his mind. He felt keenly the divorce of the existing educational system from our everyday life. He wanted to lay the foundations of education on the firm basis of the life of the people, to use the vernacular as the medium of instruction to draw inspiration from our own folk-literature and popular traditions. These were years just preceding the beginning of the Swadeshi Movement when all Bengal woke to a new consciousness of its own responsibility and gained a new confidence in its own powers. These were years characterised by an intense longing to go back to the country, both literally and spiritually.

In this atmosphere the school was started in 1901. Appropriately enough the late Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya, a great patriot and an ardent nationalist took charge of it. Although by faith a Roman Catholic he loved intensely the customs and traditions of his country. The school started under his supervision with two teachers, Pundit Shivadharma Vidyalaya (who went away after a short time) and Jagadananda Ray (who worked actively as a teacher in Santiniketan for a third of a century until his death in 1933) and five boys—two of them being the Poet's eldest son Rathindranath Tagore, and Santosh Chandra Majumdar, who came back to the institution after finishing his education in the United States and served it loyally until his death in 1926.

I am taking the following description of school life in Santiniketan in the early days from the late Ajitkumar Chakra-

* Translated from the Bengali essay "Siksha-samsara"

varty's Bengali pamphlet on "Brahma-Vidyalyaya" —

"They used to walk barefooted throughout the year and except cooking, did everything with their own hands. After the morning wash students and teachers gathered under the trees near the present library building and chanted Vedic hymns. Everybody used to put on *cheli* (sacred silk) before saying prayers, and classes were almost invariably held under the open sky in the shade of the trees. Altogether life was closely modelled on the *asramas* of ancient India."

"At first the students were not charged any fees. The Poet did not want any mercenary motives to interfere with the sacred bond between teacher and pupil, and the school was maintained in the beginning from the slender resources of the founder himself. After some time he was however obliged to introduce the fee system which was at first fixed at Rs. 15 per month."

For a long time the Poet met with little sympathy from his countrymen, very few could understand the inward significance of his institution. Many people thought it to be a mere caprice of the poet or possibly a reaction against western modes of living. He had however the silent approval of his father the Maharshi on his side. The Maharshi realized that the Poet's efforts were directed to a new synthesis and gave the new institution his blessings.

Brahmabandhab's political sentiments however proved too strong to allow him to remain engaged in purely educational work for a long time and his connexion with the institution ceased about one year after the starting of the school. In the third year of the *Vidyalyaya* a great personality joined the institution. This was Satis Chandra Ray of whom the Poet has written —

He was barely nineteen but he was born with a luminosity of soul. In him the spirit of renunciation was a natural product of an extraordinary capacity for enjoyment of life. He had a wonderful soul, living in a world of ideas, keenly responsive to all that was beautiful and great in the realm of nature and of human mind. He was a poet who would surely have taken his place among the immortals of world literature if he had lived, but he died when he was twenty thus offering his services to our school only for the period of one short year. His powers of appreciation were of the keenest, and he possessed the rare faculty of being able to kindle others with the

joy of his own appreciation. He lived with the students and worked with them, inspired by the spirit of the Asrama."

It was an irreparable loss when he died of small-pox in Santiniketan itself in January 1904. His place has never been filled in these long years.

In the summer of the same year Mohit Chandra Sen came as the *Adhyaksha* (Head of the Institution). He had an intense sympathy with the aims and ideals of the institution and brought to it a vast erudition and deep scholarship. His scheme of education was planned on a most comprehensive scale, and he did not spare himself to carry it out in practice. The number of students increased very considerably, and the arduous duties of looking after the complex details of administrative work led to a serious breakdown of his health. In 1904, he left the institution and soon after death removed him from the small band of Santiniketan workers.

Then came a time of stress and strain. The Swadeshi movement broke in tumult all round the Asrama. To Rabindranath it came as a splendid opportunity for initiating a great movement for constructive work. His intimate knowledge of the deplorable condition of our village life had convinced him that our real problem was centred round village reconstruction. To him politics was only a secondary thing, during the height of Swadeshi days he had said unequivocally that 'the ultimate object of political work is to mould the mind of the people into unity.' He said 'We must look after our own interests, carry on our own work, earn our own welfare, do everything ourselves. Speaking of our impoverished and helpless villages he said:

It will not do merely to remove wants you can never remove them completely the far greater thing is to rouse the will of the people to remove their own wants. In 1905 he wrote:

'The down-trodden and despised who have become callous to insults and oblivious of even the rights of their humanity must be taught the meaning of the word "brother". Teach them to be strong and to protect themselves for that is the only way. Take, each of you, charge of some village and organize it. Educate the villagers and show them how to put forward their united strength, so that they may in co-operation better their wretched lot. Look not for fame or praise in this undertaking. Do not expect even the gratitude of those for whom you would give your life, but be prepared rather for their opposition.'

Although Rabindranath joined the

Swadeshi movement with the full fervour of his own nature, he would not allow Santiniketan to be drawn into the whirlpool of politics. The inhabitants of the Asrama often fretted and chafed, but he constantly reminded them that the ideal of the Asrama was something different.

It was not surprising therefore when in the midst of the Swadeshi movement Rabindranath, however, suddenly returned to Santiniketan, and renewed his intimate contact with the life of the Vidyalaya. Aitkumar Chakravarti also joined the institution about this time and for a long time exerted a profound influence in the life of the Asrama by stimulating the intellectual activities of the Asrama, and by spreading its message far and wide through his own writings until his death in 1918.

From the time of his coming back to Santiniketan, Rabindranath was gradually laying more and more emphasis on the unifying principle manifesting itself throughout the whole course of the history of India. More than thirty years ago he had declared:

'In India the history of humanity is seeking to elaborate a definite synthesis. The history of India is not the history of Aryan or non-Aryan, it is not the history of the Hindus nor a history of only Hindus and Muslims taken together. Of late the British have come in and occupied an important place in India's history. This was not an uncalled for or accidental intrusion. If India had been deprived of touch with the West she would have lacked an element essential for her attainment of perfection. On us today is thrown the responsibility of building up a greater India in which Hindu and Muslim and Christian the dark-skinned and the white-skinned will all find their place.

III

IN 1913 Rabindranath left for England on his now famous *Gitanjali* tour.

* He took an active part in the foundation of the Bengal National Council of Education, which was set up as an independent organisation in opposition to the official University of Calcutta. He worked hard in its cause, made plans, raised money, organised, and gave systematic course of lectures on literature (collected and published later on in book form as *Sahitya*) to the students. A proposal was made for linking up the Santiniketan school with the National Council of Education, but nothing came of it.

On the eve of his departure the Asramika Sangha (Association of ex-Students) was started with 10 foundation members. One of the objects of the Sangha in its original form was to enlist the sympathies of the outside public in the work of the Asrama. This was a very significant feature of the new association, it definitely opened the doors of the Asrama to outsiders. It showed that the time for expansion had come.

In Europe, the Poet felt deeply the same need for opening wide the gates of the institution. In 1913 he wrote in a letter:

'All our vagueness will disappear if we can place our institution in the light of the whole world. If we confine our institution within the local limits of the time and space of our country it will lose its purity. The development of a complete manhood is our object and we must not aim at anything less than this.

It was just at this time that C F Andrews and W W Pearson offered their services to the institution. They came back with the Poet in 1914 ready to help him and to share in his work at Santiniketan. They brought a new element to the school itself. Their coming made it clear that the Santiniketan Vidyalaya must no longer remain merely as a school which should be more free and happy than other schools, but that it must seek to give expression to wider ideals representing humanity itself. Pearson served the institution till his death in 1923. Charles Andrews was Upacharya (Vice President) when he passed away in April 1940.

In 1916 he toured in Japan and America and delivered the well-known lectures on Nationalism which contain his indictment of the modern nations which had become organized as machinery of rapine and destruction. The contrast between the aggressive spirit of the modern West and the peaceful ideals of the ancient East becomes increasingly vivid. When he returned to his own country his thoughts naturally turned to the heritage of ancient India. He felt the need for an institution which would be a true centre of human culture.

On the 22nd December 1918, a special meeting of students, teachers, ex-students and well-wishers of the Santiniketan Asrama was held in the mango grove in Santiniketan, in which Rabindranath explained his ideas about the (new developments) creation of an institution which would be a true centre for the different cultures of the East. The Poet coined the word '*Visva-Bharati*' at this time. *Visva* in Sanskrit means the world in its universal aspect.

Bharati is wisdom and culture * The Visva-Bharati was to be the centre of learning for the whole world Appropriately enough the following Sanskrit text was selected as the motto of the Visva-Bharati

Yatra Visvam bhavati eka-nidam

Where the whole world forms its one single nest

From 1919 systematic arrangements were made for advanced studies in Buddhist literature, Vedic and Classical Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit and later on Tibetan and Chinese Pundit Vidhushekhar Sastri, as head of the Vidya-bhavana, worked for its success with single-minded devotion till 1934 when he joined Calcutta University With him was associated from the very beginning Pundit Kshitimohan Sen Sastri, the present Head of the Vidya-bhavana

Art and music had always occupied an important place in Rabindranath's scheme of education, and in 1918 he succeeded in establishing the Kalabhavana, the School of Art and Music as an integral part of the educational institutions in Santiniketan Nandalal Bose joined the new institution soon after its inauguration, and has made it the greatest centre of art teaching in India

IV

AT THE end of the Great War Rabindranath undertook a long tour in 1920-21 in Europe and the United States He spoke everywhere on the need of the meeting of East and West in a common fellowship of learning and a common spiritual striving for the unity of the human races

In America a young Englishman L. K. Elmhurst, saw the Poet and offered his services for founding an Institute of Rural Reconstruction near Santiniketan Elmhurst believed that the perfect balance of civilisation could only be preserved by achieving a harmonious adjustment between the city and the village This fitted in very well with the Poet's own ideas In 1918, he had asserted in his lectures on the *Centre of Indian Culture* that it must also be a centre of economic life

"It must cultivate land, breed cattle, feed itself and its students it must produce all necessities, devising the best means and using the best materials, calling science to its aid Such an institution must

* There is an allusion to India (*Bharata*) in the word *Bharati*, which thus also represents the Spirit of India.

group round it all the neighbouring villages, and vitally unite them with itself in all its economic endeavours

In 1915 Rabindranath had purchased a large plot of land at Surul, and had started experiments in agriculture, cattle-breeding, and village work Things were however, not progressing quite well and Elmhurst's offer came at an opportune time The Poet immediately decided to give Elmhurst full scope for making experiments at Surul

When he returned to India in 1921, the non-co-operation movement was at its highest Although great pressure was put upon him from all sides, he steadfastly refused to join it He could never agree to isolating India from the stream of world thought and progress In the midst of unprecedented political unrest and excitement, and against the whole force of the current of popular sentiment he expounded his own views with great courage in two lectures, *The Call of Truth and The Meeting of Cultures* (1921) He said.

"It is a fact of unique importance in the history of the world to-day, that the human races have come together as they had never done before The mentality of the world has to be changed in order to meet the new environment of the modern age

'It has been said in our scriptures *'atithih devo bhava'* asking us to realize that the Divine comes to us as our guest, claiming our homage All that is great and true in humanity is ever waiting at our gate to be invited It is not for us to question it about the country to which it belongs, but to receive it in our home and bring before it the best we have

'Our wealth is truly proved by our ability to give, and Visva-bharati is to prove this on behalf of India Our mission is to show that we have a place in the heart of the great world, that we fully acknowledge our obligation of offering it our hospitality "

Rabindranath founded the Visva-Bharati in December, 1921, and proclaimed that Visva-Bharati was India's invitation to the world, her offer of sacrifice to the highest truth of man He placed before the new institution a threefold programme

To concentrate in Santiniketan, in the midst of the Asrama Vidyalaya, the different cultures of the East, especially those that have originated in India or found shelter in her house :

To lay in Sriniketan the foundation of a happy, contented and humane life in villages: and finally,

Through the Visva-Bharati as a whole to seek to establish a living relationship between East and West to promote international amity and understanding and fulfil the highest mission of the present age—the unification of mankind

THE Visva-Bharati was organised as a non-profit-making Society registered under Act XXI of 1860. In the shaping of the constitution a large share was taken by Surendranath Tagore who as Vice-President, Editor of the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* and in other ways served the Institution in the sphere of cultural activities for nearly twenty years until his death in 1940.

Rabindranath made over to Visva-Bharati by a trust-deed the land buildings library and other properties at Santiniketan belonging to the Vidyalaya the entire amount of the Nobel Prize and the copyright of his Bengali Books. Since then he has made further contributions out of the sale-proceeds of his English books and has worked untiringly for raising donations and subscriptions for the Institution.

In 1921 besides the Asrama school (Vidyalaya) a research department was (Vidya-bhavana) a school of art (Kala-bhavana) a small section for girls (Nari-bhavana) and the nucleus of a college (Shiksha-bhavana) were already in existence at Santiniketan. There was also the Sriniketan Institute of Rural Reconstruction at Surul.

With the inauguration of the Visva-Bharati rapid developments took place in many directions. The Poet laid special stress on the programme of inviting distinguished scholars from abroad as Visiting Professors among whom may be specially mentioned the names of Sylvain Levi from France M. Winternitz from Czechoslovakia, Sren Konow from Norway, Formici and Tucci from Italy, and Germanus from Hungary. Although it has not been possible, owing to lack of funds, to continue the full programme of visiting professors, a distinctive feature of the Institution has also been the very large number of persons from abroad who have come to live and work in Santiniketan and Sriniketan.

On the institutional side also there has been a steady progress. A permanent section for Zoroastrian studies was started quite early with the help of funds raised by Parsi sympathisers in Bombay. A department of Islamic studies was added in 1927 with the magnificent gift of one lakh of rupees from H. E. H. the Nizam of Hyderabad.

Sino-Tibetan researches had been originally initiated in 1921, in 1935 the Sino-Indian Society was founded with the Poet as president. A full department for Chinese studies was started a little later with the help of funds raised by Chinese friends and a magnificent collection of one lakh of Chinese books was received from China and the Cheena-bhavana (Chinese Hall) was opened in April, 1937. A little later a special section for Hindi studies was added and a new building the Hindi-bhavana was opened in January 1939. In the sphere of vernacular education a new scheme, Lok-shiksha-sar-sad—a system of external examinations through the medium of the Bengali language—was started in 1937.

In the beginning music lessons used to be given in the Kala-bhavana (School of Art). Seasonal festivals were started

as a separate department as Sangeeta-bhavana and was placed in charge of Dinendranath Tagore who was the great custodian of Tagore music until his untimely death in 1935.

At Sriniketan also many developments have taken place. Village welfare Prati-balaka (boy scouts) agriculture and village education have always formed an important part of the programme. The possibilities of organizing village health societies on a co-operative basis was successfully demonstrated quite early and has served as a model for the expansion of village health service all over Bengal. In recent years great advances have been made in the revival of village arts and crafts specially in textiles pottery wood and leather work which command a growing market extending not only over the whole province but in other parts of India as well.



The Visva-Bharati celebrated the sixtieth birthday of the Poet on April 14, 1940. Though the actual birthday fell on May 8, in view of the summer recess of the University his pupils, friends and admirers celebrated the occasion on the first day of the Bengali New Year.

Photo S. SHAHA

by the Poet in 1922. Gradually dance recitals were added and competent dancing teachers were brought over to Santiniketan from Manipur, Gujrat and South India. Parties of boys and girls from Santiniketan often under the personal leadership of the Poet himself gave music, dance and drama recitals in Calcutta and other important places in India from time to time. Finally, the school of music and dancing was orga-

Rabindranath Tagore started the Vidyalaya at the age of 40. During exactly half the period of his eighty years, Santiniketan has remained the chief centre of his activities. Under his leadership the Visva-Bharati has become an institution unique in character and significance in our country. Jawaharlal Nehru truly remarked that he who has not visited Santiniketan has not seen India.

LAST night I dreamt that I was the same boy that I had been before my mother died. She sat in a room in a garden-house on the bank of the Ganges. I carelessly passed by without paying attention to her, when all of a sudden it flashed through my mind with an unutterable longing that my mother was there. At once I stopped and went back to her and bowing low touched her feet with my head. She held my hand, looked into

my face, and said 'You have come!'

'In this great world we carelessly pass by the room where Mother sits. Her storeroom is open when we want our food, our bed is ready when we must sleep. Only that touch and that voice are wanting. We are moving about, but never coming close to the personal presence, to be held by the hand greeted 'You have come!''

—Rabindranath Tagore

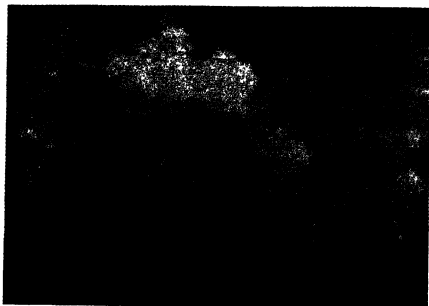
THE whole world knows about the the Visva-Bharati. Time and again since the idea took shape in his mind, Rabindranath Tagore has written about it in English and Bengali. He has travelled over oceans and across continents to preach its ideal, so that cultured people in almost every country know what the Visva-Bharati stands for. But a comparatively few among them know about Santiniketan. For, unlike the Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan is not an ideal but a place. And to know a place you must stay there, at least you must see it with your own eyes.

It is difficult to describe Santiniketan. It is a small place: the farthest distance within it is not more than half-a-mile at the outside. Also, it is a growing place: you must visit it twice a year, or perhaps oftener, if your impression of it is to keep pace with its changes.

At every visit new features will claim your attention. Some of them are merely physical—the inevitable result of the growing needs of an expanding settlement: roads, buildings, even clumps of trees which are planted with great care and ceremony. But these are not all. If you are visiting Santiniketan after a long interval, you will probably be struck by other changes not quite so superficial. For, the life of an institution which attempts, as Santiniketan does, a synthesis of the old and the new, of the West and the East, needs must depend on perpetual experimentation, and this means ever new adjustments and adaptations. The cumulative effect of these over a long period may so alter the visible shape of things as to produce the impression of radical change. The transformation of what was at the beginning only a new type of school—and a very small school at that—into the world-famous Visva-Bharati, with such varied activities that they have to be shared by several departments, confirms such an impression.

Really speaking, however, it is not so much change as development that has taken place at Santiniketan: development through a succession of phases. Had it not been so, the place would long ago have ceased to be interesting. The fact that Santiniketan has never stopped short in its growth makes it so attractive.

But the essential character of Santiniketan has not changed through its successive periods of growth. For this essential character derives mainly from the personality of Rabindranath Tagore. The Visva-Bharati is the institutional expression of the Poet's ideal of education. Santiniketan, the place, should



—Giant palms swaying against the sky and bare undulating plains are typical features of Santiniketan landscape

Photo—H. SANYAL

not be identified entirely with this institution. Like his poems and his paintings, it is the expression of the Poet's personality. That is why it is so concrete and so colourful. You may or may not be impressed by the Visva-Bharati and its educational ideals. But unless you are a very hard-hearted or a very dull person, Santiniketan is sure to cast its spell over you.

younger among them, wore their hair long, spoke in a soft voice and wrote poems. On my first visit to Santiniketan I actually picked up a torn leaf, evidently from a student's exercise-book, scribbled all over with verses which bore the unmistakable stamp of juvenile inspiration. But that was all. I neither saw long hair nor heard soft voices. The students of the school—it

SANTINIKETAN

It is difficult to explain the nature of this spell. People who have never visited Santiniketan have all sorts of queer notions about it. At one time, not so long ago, it was widely believed that all Santiniketanites, especially the

was in the pre-Visva-Bharati days—were the liveliest lot of boys I had ever seen. They climbed trees, fought one another, even chased poisonous snakes. They sang with lusty voices. But they understood discipline. And they acted



—The oldest building at Santiniketan built by the Poet's father Maharshi Debendranath Tagore is now the Guest-House

Photo—H. SANYAL



—The main gateway of Sriniketan, the Rural Reconstruction Centre of the Visva-Bharati, with its giant cartwheels, symbol of Rural India

Photo—S. SHANA

he welcomed us to Shantiniketan. I was conducted straightway to a stone seat in a shady grove. In front of me was a stretch of ground smoothed and polished until it resembled the surface of a threshing floor upon which had been chalked out a circular design. This served for a place of assembly which might be said to correspond to the speech-room of an English public school. A little behind me, standing under the trees, were grouped the teachers, all clad in white. In front of me were the boys of the school drawn up in a semi-circle on the edge of the design. All were dressed in yellow—the colour of spring. On my right was a group of girls, pupils along with the boys at the school. Led by a pundit the gathering chanted Vedic hymns in Sanskrit with striking effect. The significance of the scene could not be lost upon any one acquainted with the outlines of ancient Indian history. Here was a reproduction in miniature of the conditions amid which the civilisation of India had been born, the life close to nature in the heart of the forests which provided the early Aryan settlers with all that they required. One recognised in all that one saw around one both a protest against the artificiality of modern life, and an offering of homage to the ideals and traditions of the past."

superbly—I am referring to their delightful performance on the stage.

To-day the number of students is much larger; they hail from all parts of India; and there are girls as well as boys among them. But they are as lively as their predecessors ever were. If there are fewer snakes to chase, there are more trees to climb. And there are certainly more things to interest them

Heart of Aryavarta, from which the following quotation is taken.

"A two-mile walk from the station of Bholpur, up a gradual ascent through the bright sunshine of a February morning, was pure joy. Standing at the gateway of the ashram was a tall, commanding figure clothed in ample robes of white. With a charming courtesy

and SRINIKETAN

By

HIRANKUMAR SANYAL

to-day, a richer social life and greater cultural opportunities. Dancing, painting and music are taught systematically. Acting is better organised, less amateurish. There is a constant flow of visitors from all parts of the world, some of whom are world-famous persons. Contact with them serves to widen the outlook of the students and the teachers in a manner which was not possible in the early days of the institution.

But the Poet's personality dominates everything now as it did then. It breathes through all the activities of the place, lends colour to its ceremonies and diffuses sweetness in its social relations. It gives to Santiniketan, as it did then, its atmosphere—the indescribable charm that one can feel but never formulate.

How this atmosphere affects an outsider is best described in the words of the Marquis of Zetland, who visited the place when, as Lord Ronaldshay, he was the Governor of Bengal. This experience is recorded in his book, *The*

THE Marquis further mentions that wandering through the grounds after the ceremony of welcome was over he was led to a rude seat beneath an ancient tree—a low stone block topped



—When the Poet speaks at the 'Mandir', the overflowing assembly fills the steps.

Photo—S. SHANA

by two slabs of marble, marking the spot where Maharshi Devendranath Tagore was in the habit of sitting in meditation during his life of communion with God. For the Maharshi "an austere figure driven restlessly to and fro over the land by an absorbing quest no less than that of God came here sometime in the middle of the nineteenth century and found peace and raised a temple of worship. The name Santiniketan dates from then.

The guest-house near the temple or *Mandir* as it is called at Santiniketan was for a long time the only two-storied building in the whole settlement. Today there are several such buildings. The library building, the boys' and the girls' hostels, the *Cheena-bhavana* or the Hall of Chinese Culture all are two-storied buildings. There are others

gem of the remarkable architectural style evolved at Santiniketan, thanks to the resourcefulness and sense of design of Surendranath Kar. But more wonderful than all these is the garden at Uttarayan—partly ornamental, partly landscape—which Rathindranath Tagore and Pratima Devi, the Poet's son and daughter-in-law, have coaxed with infinite skill and patience out of the stubborn, almost impossible soil of the Birbhum uplands.

Talking of buildings, I am reminded of the huge *Kuthi* which dominates Sriniketan—the sister settlement which has almost become a part of Santiniketan. At one time the Sriniketan *Kuthi* belonged to the East India Company from whom it passed into the hands of the late Lord Sinha, whose home at Raipur is within easy walking distance of San-

schools, dispensaries, co-operative societies. He will meet there men and women, belonging to the poorest stratum of Indian society. They remember with affection the name of the late Kalmohan Ghosh, who became associated with the Poet in the early days of his school at Santiniketan and later dedicated himself to the cause of village uplift, for he carried to them the message of awakening—the message of "Gurudeva", at the mention of whose name these poor people's faces gleam with gratitude. The visitor to the villages will probably also meet boys—splendid specimens of growing manhood, especially, if he selects a *santal* village—who have been organized as scouts by the workers of Sriniketan. You should watch their performance at the annual rally at the time of the anniversary celebration of Sriniketan in February. It would be a sheer delight.

Not less important than these is the work of the crafts department at Sriniketan. In the Hall of Industries you will be given a demonstration of the working of whatever craft you are interested in—weaving, carpentry, tanning, leather-work or pottery. You will also be offered for sale beautiful products turned out by the workmen here, the designs on which bear the impress of the Santiniketan school of art which Nandalal Bose has made famous to the world over.

Village work and crafts at Sriniketan, painting and research at Santiniketan, are the different aspects of the work of the Visva-Bharati that so impresses a visitor during even short days' stay. But if you want a more intimate glimpse of the place you must remain there for a longer period extending over several days or perhaps weeks. Then, probably you will meet some of the old residents like Kshittimohan Sen who possesses the rarer gift of being able to instruct, entertain and inspire at the same time. You will meet others who are new-comers but over whom Santiniketan has already cast its strange spell. And, between them, if you are a sensitive person, you will catch something of the spirit that holds together his wonderful community.

But nothing reveals the spirit of Santiniketan or Sriniketan more truly than the many festivals which mark there the passage of time. Whether the occasion is the advent of the spring or the start of the ploughing season, the planting of trees or the gathering in of the harvest, the key-note is the same—the realization of the intimate bond that ties man to the earth, the merging of the soul of man into the soul of nature.



—*Disciples by Nandalal Bose and his pupils decorate the outer walls of the Visva-Bharati library building.*

Photo—S. SHAW

which though not two-storied are quite impressive all the same. One of these the European Guest house is known as *Ratan-kuti* after the name of its donor Lady Ratan Tata. But the most impressive of all is the group of buildings in the part of the settlement known as Uttarayan where the Poet and his family have their residential quarters. The largest building in this area—the *Udayana*—offers an interesting study in architecture with its straggling form, its irregular contour, its combination of severity with decorative exuberance. Within a stone's throw of it are four equally interesting but much smaller buildings in all of which the Poet has lived at some time or other. *Konark* the oldest in this group, now occupied by his Secretary, Anil Kumar Chanda. *Syamali* the famous mud-hut, *Punascha* which, by the way, is also the title of one of his later poetical works, and last, in order of time, *Udichi* a tiny two-storied structure which is a

tiniketan. It was here that the Poet planted with the help of Mr. L. K. Flinners a centre for rural welfare activities as part of his Visva-Bharati scheme. Since then the centre has expanded other buildings have sprung up and Sriniketan, like Santiniketan, is a flourishing settlement through the activities of which the Poet hopes to realize his long-cherished dream of founding a University as an integral part of the life of the surrounding countryside.

III

THE casual visitor does not see much of this life, unless he chooses to walk out, across stretches of bare upland and along dusty roads, into the villages which surround these settlements. Then he will find many signs of rural welfare activities of the Visva-Bharati villages,



—The hostel of the 'Kala-Bhavan' (Arts College) with bas-reliefs on its outer walls

Photo—S. SHAHA

The sweep of colourful robes, the cadence of swaying bodies and the exquisite melody of the Poet's songs combine to express the very rhythm of nature—the procession of the seasons as they pass in cloud and rain, the cooling breezes of spring and the scorching winds of Vaisakh that blow in little tornadoes the red dust on the roads and the fallen leaves in the glades

IV

THUS, as the seasons change and the years roll on, both Santiniketan and Sriniketan continue to grow, their activities expand, their areas encroach more and more upon the open spaces which surround them. It is inevitable that in this process of expansion mud-huts



—The 'Udayana' (where the Poet now resides) with its straggling form, irregular contours and its combination of severity with decorative exuberance is a striking example of architecture

Photo—S. SHAHA



—The garden at Uttarayana, partly landscape, partly ornamental

Photo—H. SANYAL

should make room for buildings of brick and mortar, that carts should be pushed off the roads that lead to and away from the settlement by cars and buses and trucks, that the hurricane lantern should be replaced by the electric lamp. Something of the old-world charm of the place may disappear as a result of these changes. But much still remains.

Around the settlement, nature in her varying moods still holds sway in the undulating meadows criss-crossed by irregular depressions that look like miniature ravines. Here and there are clumps of trees, clusters of huts, patches of paddy field. These give to the settlement a setting and a character which make an unforgettable impression on every visitor and deeply influence the residents of the place. Inside the *asram* too, one feels the touch of nature at almost

every spot. But none has felt it more keenly than Rabindranath Tagore. The moonlight caught up in the foliage of the famous *sal* avenue, the flush of spring in the *madhavi* creeper in the shade of which classes are held every morning and afternoon, the wind sighing in the *venu-kunja* (bamboo-grove) which gives its name to a hut where Dinendranath, "the custodian of my songs", lived for many years, gleam in the vivid imagery and break into the incredible tunes of his poems and songs. For, if the spell of the Poet's personality is the secret of what I have vaguely described as the 'atmosphere' of Santiniketan, Santiniketan, too, has cast her spell on the Poet, the prince of spellbinders.



Girls heralding the advent of spring in the mango-grove—a typical ceremony at Santiniketan

Photo—H. SANJAL

A POET'S DREAM

SANTINIKETAN is an anomaly not only in India but also in the world of to-day. It stands as an island of peace—a poet's dream amid carnage and terror, travail and turmoil. In India it stands apart from the surging undercurrents. Only in Santiniketan can one freely come and go; one can, in spite of the world, dream dreams, artists can paint and poets can create.

By

ADRIENNE MOORE

IMPRESSIONS OF SANTINIKETAN
OF A VISITOR FROM
ABROAD

Because of its peculiar character, Santiniketan makes two completely opposite reactions on those who come here. One is either caught into the toils of dreamland or violently repelled. Re-

pelled not by the beauty but by the import. The reaction depends on whether one can leave the outside world behind upon entering the magic portals of Santiniketan. It is a place that either soothes the soul and lulls it into a forgetfulness of the turmoil without the gates, or else tears it to shreds due to the contrast. The mind races like a motor beyond control at 110 miles an hour. There are, accordingly, those who see in it a panacea for the aching world and those who find it superfluous,—the dream of a forgotten, nearly dead existence. What place, their minds demand, is there for such an oasis when, all around, the world bleeds and suffers? In any case, no one can leave Santiniketan without some benefit. Both turmoil and peace are good for the soul.

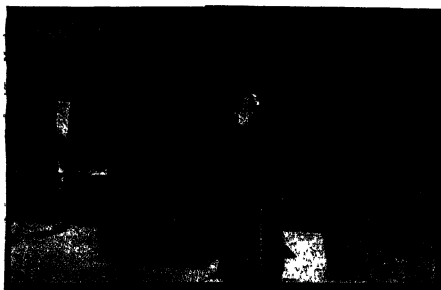
II

SANTINIKETAN has a personality of its own. It emanates from its core—Rabindranath Tagore. Long ago the father of the Poet built in Santiniketan



"Syamali", the famous mud-hut of the Poet into which he moved on his birthday in 1935

Photo—S. SHAHA



—The Poet framed in the doorway of "Syamali"

Photo—H. SANYAL

a charming retreat. The emerald mosses of its pillars and the shadows of its ample trees still welcome transient guests. The Victorian glasswork pergola of its courtyard is the chapel where, just after dawn, each morning, students can assemble for simple prayers. Small offerings of flowers—the dew still fresh on their petals—lie on the low tables of white marble, simple prayers are recited. Sometimes the low moan of Indian music lends its charm.

Around this nucleus the Poet built his school. But Santiniketan has extended and expanded. The school for little ones has grown into a college, a school of art, of music and dance. There are private homes. One is surprised by the size of Santiniketan. The spirit of intimacy has a hard time surviving amid such expansion. The Poet tends to become a legend. Gone are the days when he wandered around the grounds and spoke to the students and told stories to the little ones. His restless spirit carried him from house to house. It is said there is hardly an

old building on the grounds in which the Poet has not lived. If some spot struck his fancy, there he would reside.



—From "Syamali" the Poet went to "Punascha", built mainly of mud reinforced with coal-tar

Photo—H. SANYAL

But the spirit of Rabindranath Tagore dominates Santiniketan,—his music, his

separating you from the infinite. Its weight rests upon you, pressing down upon the heart and mind, until the body cries out in agony.

III

THE EYE is delighted by the red earth, the gracious green of the full-bosomed trees after the rains. There are the lolling cowherds: men burnt black from the sun. And along the paths across the plain from a far point of compass to you comes a line of Santal women in single file. Tall and stately they walk, their hips swaying,—on their heads, earthen or brass pots. Their full breasts point like the chalices of passion flowers under their shabby clothes. Scarlet hibiscus adorn their hair and dramatize their ebony skins.



—From "Punascha" the Poet moved into "Udichi", the house where he resided till his illness last year

Photo—S. SENGUPTA

Occasionally, in the dusk hours, hurrying home to low, muddy villages, one can see a Santal boy with bow and arrow,—perhaps of the very same pattern used 2500 years ago by his ancestors before the Aryan conquerors came. Certainly, clothes do not bother him. He is content with his short loin cloth, his immaculately swept mud house, perhaps a cow and a string bed. Who should want more? He lives with and is of nature. Two thousand five hundred years have passed as a day. As he races with the setting sun to his village without lights, he notices the swaying of a gaunt palm against the sky and sees the ripple of young rice green in the paddy fields. But no poet he. He thinks of the intoxicating juice he can get from the palm on the morrow and the hours of painful toil ahead of him among the rice buds. He is of the earth. His poetry is life.

Santal villages abound in the neighbourhood of Santiniketan. They are distinguishable from Bengali villages by the fact that the latter often have two-storey houses and are not so clean. But the rhythm of life seems to be practically the same. Their silence is broken by the creaking of the grinding stone and the thud of the grain-beater. Dawn is still the alarm clock, sunset—the curfew.

Though these villages are not very close together, there is a feeling of population density. One cannot go for a walk anywhere without meeting people. Santiniketan belongs to the fields around it. It cannot ignore them. The

poverty of the people living in their world of the era of Noah, working, thinking, living as though the institution had never come, is the most appalling thing. Amid these people the students of Sriniketan—the Rural Reconstruction Centre of Visva-Bharati—go and work, a baffling task with the hard clay soil without means of irrigation in one of the driest spots in Bengal.

IV

SUNSET at Santiniketan comes with a rush, but lingers long, for this is the top of the world and just over the edge dawn comes on the other side,—at least

that is how one feels. One is content to manage with the few hours of electric light available and go to bed by 10 o'clock unless one sits out under the stars which cobweb the heavens, and listens to the low hum of the electric plant breaking the otherwise noiseless night. But this is a luxury, for life in Santiniketan begins with dawn. The pattern of the peasant is followed with dead silence in midday,—the hours of toil extending from 7 in the morning to 11 and from 2 in the afternoon till 5 o'clock. Then there are games or walks, dinner, a little conversation and bed. However dreamy the locale and spirit there is work to be done at Santiniketan and it is done. A poet's dream is being realized here—slowly but steadily.



—The Poet at a dance-recital given by the girls of Santiniketan on the last Bengali New Year evening (April 14, 1941) when the Visva-Bharati celebrated his birth-anniversary

Photo—S. SHAMA

SANTINIKETAN SCHOOL SONG

By

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

[Translated from the original Bengali by the author]

SHE is our own, the darling of our hearts, the Santiniketan.
Our dreams are rocked in her arms.
Her face is a fresh wonder of love every time we see her.
For she is our own, the darling of our heart.

IN the shadows of her trees we meet,
In the freedom of her open sky,
Her mornings come and her evenings
Bringing down heaven's kisses,
Making us feel anew that she is our own, the darling of our heart.

THE stillness of her shades is stirred by the woodland whisper;
Her 'amlaki' groves are quiver with the rapture of leaves.
She dwells in us and around us however far we may wander.
She weaves our hearts in a song making us one in music,
Turning our strings of love with her own fingers.
And we ever remember that she is our own, the darling of our heart.



—From a photo taken at Santiniketan, 1930

RABINDRANATH as A TEACHER

By

NARESH CHANDRA SEN-GUPTA

WHEN we talk of education we think of the school, and the word teacher calls up the picture of a somewhat severe gentleman, sitting at a desk and talking to youngsters in the forms.

Yet everybody knows that there is more education than we get at schools and more teachers than we know or acknowledge. All our life from birth to death is in a sense one long-drawn course of education, and teacher are all around us. They are young and old, learned and ignorant, high placed and lowly,—from all men we come across we learn something.

But among all these myriads of teachers who educate us there are some men who stand out above others—men of letters, for instance. The books they write teach us—not merely text-books designed for the purpose of teach-

ing but all books. And among men of letters there are just a few who come only once in a time, and who by their work leave such an impression upon the make-up of the mind of the generations who come after them that they can well be called the makers and teachers of whole generations and some of them of the whole of mankind.

Rabindranath was born to be such a teacher. His long life is in fact a long course of instruction of his people and it would be no exaggeration to say that to more than one generation of Bengalis he stands in the position of a great teacher who has taught them to learn a beautiful language which

he has made and to use it for their own purposes ; he has instructed them in the finer shades of poetic art, which, before him, were unknown in Bengali literature and by learning to appreciate which Bengali culture has assuredly taken a big step forward in poetic education ; he has opened up to us beauties of nature in a way in which no one else before him did ; he has taught us to know life and to laugh and weep at its infinite varieties which he has depicted for us ; he has given us a philosophy of life which is sublime and elevating and given us a training in national and individual self-respect which has had a defi-

nite effect in raising the moral stature of the generations who have been nursed on the literature of Rabindranath.

By his voluminous contributions to the literature of Bengal and his great personality standing out against his contemporaries, he has thus had a much greater share in moulding the lives of the Bengalis of to-day than any other single man, so that it may be said with justice that a good part of the intellectual and moral equipment of the mind of Bengal to-day owes its source to him. He has been a teacher in a much bigger sense than the school master can ever aspire to be. But, perhaps at least for a great part of his life he was unconscious of his role as a teacher or of the tremendous success he was destined to have as such. For he started his life as—and for a pretty long time continued to believe himself to be—a mere worshipper of beauty, a singer of songs, whose task would be done if he could only make the life of his reader a little brighter and a little more joyous than it had been before. It was only rather late in life apparently that he assumed the conscious role of a teacher and wielded his influence as such with telling effect.

Reading his earlier poems one feels that he understood himself to be a runaway from life—one who more or less played with his life and merely made merry with his pipe. A time came, however, as indicated in his poem—*এবার ফিরাতে ফেরা*—when he turned back from what he thought to be a more or less useless life and definitely undertook the task of teaching men to live a fuller, nobler and a more effective life.

It was, perhaps, in one of those moods—when, unconscious of his great role as a teacher in a fuller sense, he was filled with the idea of the futility of a mere poet's life—that he conceived the idea of standing out as a teacher in a more direct but a far narrower sense. He conceived that he could give the boys of Bengal much better and healthier education on much more improved methods than the education that was given in the schools of those

days and at Santiniketan, where his great father had built an *Asram*, he conceived the idea of the school which would be different from the types of schools in Bengal in those days.

II

RABINDRANATH'S own education was very unorthodox. He never took kindly to the shackles of school discipline but revelled in freedom both in the choice of his reading and in the mode of his life. He loved to be in communion with Nature and imbibed a great deal from such communion which has enriched the literature that he has given us. As a teacher Rabindranath, therefore, naturally preferred the modern ideas of freedom in education and believed more in instruction in intimate contact with Nature rather than in the cribbed school rooms.

Ideals naturally played a far greater part in the conception and development of this school than they do in most educational institutions of this country. Informed by his own experience of the futility and cramping influence of common school education and by his knowledge of educational ideals of the past and present in India and the world, and inspired by the thought of the lessons of ancient India—where young pupils repaired in early youth and spent years in a happy pursuit of learning in healthy and invigorating environments, their whole life in charge of their teacher—and by the life and work of educational idealists like Pestalozzi, Rabindranath's fine poetic imagination wove round these thoughts a great ideal of an institution where a full and complete education would be given to his pupils. The pupils like the *Brahmacharis* of the past would live in the *Asram*, free of the turmoil of busy town life, free of unhealthy environments, and free to develop their character and individuality in an atmosphere of academic, artistic and spiritual life. Their teacher would take charge of their whole life during the years at school and guide and mould it and help to make it grow into a healthy, beautiful and use-

ful one. Instruction would be given to each on most up-to-date methods, and, instead of an atmosphere of gloom and irksome regulation, there would prevail an atmosphere of joy and freedom in which, under the influence of the great personality of their teacher, they would imbibe, with knowledge, a fine artistic mind and temper full of joy of life and joy in nature and society of their fellow men.

Ideals like these went to the make-up of the life of the school to which Rabindranath had devoted his life and which he has led to an astonishing degree of success.

But the actual success he achieved in the instruction given in the school is not a complete measure of the value of his ideas. His idealism was higher than anything he could achieve within the limitations under which he had to work. Besides, education is a whole-time job to the man who wants to be a teacher, and he can hardly afford to be anything else. His pupils have to be, if not the sole, certainly the principal interest in his life. The multifarious activities in which Rabindranath gradually found himself occupied left him comparatively little time for that absolute and single-minded devotion to the work of teaching in the school that was needed to enable him to achieve a fuller realisation of his ideas.

Luckily, however, Rabindranath was blessed with assistants of no mean merit in his great work. Other teachers than Rabindranath himself had outstanding personalities and made a definite mark upon the pupils. Besides, the intimate contact with a man of the genius and calibre of Rabindranath was itself an educative factor of no small value. His school, therefore, was not an inconsiderable success and apart from what results it could show in the sphere of the intellectual development of its pupils, it developed a striking individuality of its own in the domain of Art. The work of the pupils of Santiniketan in various departments of art is well known, and it has not only made a place for itself in the public esteem but has greatly influenced the artistic

culture of Bengal and India as a whole.

With the development of the school and partly as a result of the contacts that Rabindranath made in his several tours to the West and the East, Rabindranath conceived the idea of a new type of university, which would be not only a centre of high culture in itself but would be a meeting ground of the cultures of the whole world. This idea he has tried to embody in the Visva-Bharati which has attracted to his provincial sanctum the best talents from all parts of the world.

III

RABINDRANATH'S interest in the education of the people of Bengal and of his discontent with the cramping methods of education followed in schools and colleges was not a sudden growth. It had grown on him from his youth and he had taken more than one occasion in the early years of this century to ventilate his ideas of what education ought to be, notably during the time that he was the editor of the *Bangadashan*.

When in 1906 in connection with the agitation against the partition of Bengal a great wave of nationalism passed over the province and showed itself in dissatisfaction with almost everything which the British connection had brought to the country, one of the manifestations of that spirit was a revulsion against Calcutta University. The first movement was one started by the students for the boycott of the Calcutta University. Agitation had carried that idea to a high emotional pitch, and it seemed that the University and its colleges ran a great risk of being abandoned by the students.

Some of the more thoughtful amongst the leaders of those days took in hand this movement, which started as a purely destructive one, and tried to lead it along constructive channels. They conceived the idea of starting a national university—a university which would strike a new path of its own leaving the old rut of the State universities.

With this idea Rabindranath found himself in great sympathy. It seemed to promise to him the fulfilment of his own dreams of university education as it ought to be. He, therefore, readily joined the small band of thinkers who busied themselves in working out the conception of a national university. He addressed meetings and spoke of his own ideals, and by all accounts he was going to take a great active part in the formation and development of a national university.

But an atmosphere of political turmoil is possibly the worst under which a true university can be moulded. The scheme for the national university had not gone very far when heated controversies arose; and, between men each of whom had his own educational or political ideas to forward and those who had control of the financial resources which alone could bring a university into existence, the idea of a national university made its weary way through acrid controversies with results very short of the ideals of a national university, as Rabindranath would conceive it. When the project ultimately took its shape in the form of the National Council of Education, a great deal of the political ferment among the students which had given the first impetus to the idea had died out. Educational ideals of men like Rabindranath Tagore found little

in the finished product to inspire them. Thus, though Rabindranath allowed himself to be associated with the institution at its start, he shortly ceased to take any further interest in it.

After that, his educational ideals and activities were strictly confined to his school at Santiniketan to which he was then able to give more undivided attention than later. Shortly afterwards, however, Rabindranath was dragged out of his seclusion into the open when there was a sudden accession of world-wide appreciation for his work leading ultimately to the Nobel Prize. Great as was the value of this popularity and appreciation to himself and his people and tremendous as was the educative influence which it has enabled him to exercise upon the people of the world as a man of letters, it naturally tended in a certain measure to diminish the volume of his direct educational efforts. Yet, on the other hand, it brought to the institution which he had started at Santiniketan an amount of support, sympathy and inspiration from the whole world that, under the inspiring guidance of his ideas and with such direct assistance that he was able to give to it, it has now grown into a university which has an individuality of its own, very different from that of other educational institutions.

The direct educational efforts of Rabindranath, great as they have been compared with the achievements of lesser men, are however, comparatively insignificant by the side of the far greater work that he has done in building up the mind and culture of more than one generation of men, primarily in Bengal and indirectly all over the world, by merely being a great poet and a great all-round man of letters.

"HEWERS OF TEXTS AND DRAWERS OF BOOK-LEARNING"

LET me say clearly that I have no distrust of any culture because of its foreign character. On the contrary, I believe that the shock of such extraneous forces is necessary for the vitality of our intellectual nature.

"What I object to is the artificial arrangement by which foreign educa-

tion tends to occupy all the space of our national mind, and thus kills or hampers the great opportunity for the creation of a new thought-power by a new combination of truths. It is this which makes me urge that all the elements in our own culture have to be strengthened, not to resist the

Western culture, but truly to accept and assimilate it; to use for our sustenance, not as our burden; to get mastery over this culture, and not to live on its skirts as the hewers of texts and drawers of book-learning."

—Rabindranath Tagore

Life and Work of RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Quest for Selfhood

By

NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI

OF M. André Maurois's *Ariel* or the Life of Shelley it was said that the cardinal mistake of the book was that it sought to depict Shelley minus his poetry. In regard to Rabindranath Tagore it is the easiest thing to run to the other extreme—to become engrossed in the poet at the expense of the man. That would be a grievous error because—to put the most obvious objection first—he is many things as good or nearly as good as a great poet. He is a great short-story writer, in fact, one of the very greatest of them with world literature as the standard of reference. He is a novelist, if not of the same standard of technique and inspiration as in his short stories, at all events one of the three greatest Bengal has produced, and Bengal's achievement in fiction is not something which can be brushed aside as merely provincial. Then, he is a critic and essayist, journalist, and populariser of knowledge. He is a philosopher, a religious teacher, and a religious practitioner. He is an educationist, a social reformer, a pioneer in practical Swadeshi, a deep political thinker without being one of the official, academic and conventional kind. He is a musician both as composer and virtuoso, and an actor of remarkable powers and imaginative insight. Last of all, in his old age he has shown himself to be a painter, unclassed and unclassable perhaps, but in this field also displaying a bewildering wealth of romantic fancy. Further, it must be recalled that he it was who supplied the inspiration—the seed thought—of the modern Indian school of painting founded by Abanindranath Tagore. All this shows an amazing range of interests and attainments, and even then one is not sure that the list of his significant achievements has been run through.

Naturally, no one could or would claim that all that he has written, done or taught is of equal excellence, but even after the rigidest allowance for unevenness has been made, the lowest common factor of quality remains so high that this alone precludes the idea of considering him as one thing rather than something else. This is the first argument against

appraising him piecemeal, but even more than that any attempt at sampling him or judging him by one set of achievements is bound to be misleading for the simple reason that such a method would take the critic further and further away from the fundamental motive force of his life, that force in truth which makes his life a unity in spite of its manifold facets, a force which not only prevents him from degenerating into a Jack of all trades but on the other hand makes him Jack unfrittered, unified and whole, in spite of an immense and deliberate variety of effort. In reality Rabindranath is Jack realizing and discovering himself in and through all his trades.

That may not be the sort of life-formula which finds favour with the citizens of the highly specialised modern world, but it is the formula which explains Leonardo da Vinci, Goethe, and Leibnitz. Rabindranath is a humanist, the greatest humanist India has produced, and one of the greatest the world has known. Any researcher can discover for himself after a little preliminary wrestling with the material how toughly Rabindranath and his life-work refuse to be sliced up into monographs.

II

THE great driving and unifying power in Rabindranath's life is the quest for personal enrichment. From his individual standpoint all his activities are only part of an undivided and ceaseless quest for self-realization through manifold contact with the world and life. He has never sought individual salvation away from the world ;—my salvation will not come through renunciation, I want to live among men, he has himself said. That explains why Rabindranath's faith in life on this earth is as unwavering and strong as his faith in life beyond the gate of death. There have been great men for whom the contemplation of the fact of death has proved too great a deterrent in the way of taking a continued interest in life. For Tolstoy, death posed the final and the most baffling dilemma of life, and it is bound to be more or less so with every man capable of reflexion. Very often the moralist has been led by death to a mere denunciation of the world as an illusion and mockery—an arid and withering philosophy at best—but the mystic, or rather the man with the true spiritual

temper, has almost invariably sought refuge in the contemplation of an eternal beatitude which to him has made even the good things of the world of small worth. "And if any have been so happy as truly to understand Christian annihilation, ecstasies, exultation, liquefaction, transformation, the kiss of the spouse, gustation of God, and ingressation into the divine shadow, they have already had an handsome anticipation of heaven; the glory of the world is surely over, and the earth in ashes unto them." Or, again, in the words that have been put in the mouth of St. Thomas Aquinas in explanation of his silence and inactivity after his vision at Mass in Naples:

*"My writing is at end. I have seen such things reveal'd
That what I have written and taught seemeth to me of
small worth
And hence I hope in my God, that, as of doctrin
Ther will be speedily also an end of Life!"*

These are typical mystical reactions to the world. Mystical faith has nothing in common with that other sterile brand of religiosity which makes men live in the Slough of Despond and turn upon life as certain poisonous and fierce snakes are believed to turn upon themselves. It is a joyous creed, seeking to transform the joy of life into another and, what the mystic believes to be, a higher, a purer, and a more enduring form of joy. Nevertheless, it creates a mood of unworldly elation which tends to blunt the keen edge of the more human joy of life, and to blanch its radiance as the sun does that of the moon. It is only necessary to turn to St. Francis to see how not even the most child-like and sincere adoration of Nature could turn away the true mystic from voluntary abnegation of all the gracious, kindly, and consoling things that the physical universe has to offer to us. That, one should say, is the mystic way, the very essence of mysticism. But curious as it may seem, with all his deep and sincere religiousness, all his plain inclination to mystical faith Rabindranath Tagore is an exception to that rule. He is a mystic and a humanist at the same time, certainly a remarkable phenomenon in a man with such staunch faith in the life which is believed to lie beyond death, and looking forward to death for his final liberation from the bonds of human imperfections and worldly transitoriness.

Rabindranath Tagore's philosophy of life seems to have, not one, but two faces. If it has anchored itself in the faith in an eternal existence transcending death, it has not fastened itself less exultantly to the existence which will be cut off inexorably by the unexplained mystery of death. For all the strength of his faith in an after-life, he feels as poignantly as any blind, clinging, trusting child of mother earth could that life, her supreme gift, so far as the individual's memory is concerned, comes but once to man; he is certainly unable to get over the fact that within the bounds of one birth and one death alone are we given the sole unbroken stretch of consciousness in which we can see and feel achievement added to achievement, experience enriching previous experience, tint laid on tint; perhaps he is also not unmoved by the thought that the joy arising out of the expectation of life after death or rebirth could

at the utmost be an achievement in faith but could never be an achievement in experience.

III

MY knowledge of the history of mysticism is too imperfect for me to be able to say whether it has any parallels to offer to Rabindranath's paradox of being a mystic and worshipper of mother earth at the same time. Abbé Brémont, who has written with truth and justice about the similarities and dissimilarities between the poetic and the religious experience, would perhaps have said that there was nothing startling in this inasmuch as it was only an extension of the paradox of Rabindranath's being a poet. Abbé Brémont admits similarity between the mystical and the poetical activity; in fact, he has given one of the best expositions of the inter-connectedness of the two; but at the same time he holds poetic activity to be only a roughly sketched, confused, and imperfect reproduction of mystical activity, so that the poet, according to him, is only a mystic by fits and starts and a mystic who has missed his vocation.

Perhaps the point would become clearer if I were to quote the words of an eminent theologian whom Brémont consulted. "You are right," this theologian wrote to Brémont, "in saying that poetry is a kind of prayer which does not really pray; which imitates prayer; which employing some of the resources of the deep-seated soul—in which lies its excellence—which gives at a discount an *ersatz* of the religious solution. Good as a medium and as a bait, in derationalizing *Animus*, poetry awakens and stimulates *Anima* but it remains good only in so far as it gives rise to the nostalgia for an absolute satisfaction of which it remains radically incapable; it becomes even dangerous in proportion as it comes to regard itself as perfect and independent and as attaining the object at once ideal and real which only religion can have a foreboding of, anticipate and give."

Can one extend this diagnosis and say that, not simply as a poet but as a philosopher as well, Rabindranath's universally admitted mysticism is not the real thing, but only a make-believe or a substitute, and that it is nothing more than a projection of his humanism and earth-loving credo? It requires a scholar and an expert in the history of religious thought to answer that question, into which a dabbler in literary criticism had better not allow himself to be trapped unawares. But in the history of Hindu religious creeds, and particularly in certain folk cults which have held sway among the Indian masses in the last three or four centuries, there is evidence of an intense faith in supra-mundane life going hand in hand with a child-like clinging to mortal existence. Even mendicants with their back turned on the world and going about with the beggar's bowl have sung with poignant conviction about the value of life and with equally poignant regret of its transience. In Rabindranath's combined mysticism and humanism one often detects insistent notes of these folk creeds. Anyway, the fact remains that in him the consciousness of the supra-mundane and the mundane life is almost equally balanced, and that the ever present

sense of annihilation, albeit bodily to his thinking, has led him to set a value on life which no epicure could match.

IV

ABOVE everything else, this attitude has cast its indelible stamp on his life and life-work, so that without it one finds no key to the variety of his interests and activities. He values life, and he feels equally strongly its evanescence. Therefore, he has turned to life and the world with all the strength of his immense vitality to garner his harvest while it was day. If he has been selective in this quest, he has been so only in his preferences and not in *a priori* exclusions. He has felt his way forward to each kind of activity that could contribute to the sum-total of his being almost as instinctively as a creeper spreads out its tendrils towards the sun. Or rather, to vary the metaphor, he has gone about much as a dowsing man does with his wand and has struck at each source of life-giving water that he has come upon. In all the wide range of his activities extending from poetry to politics he has spread out the tentacles of his consciousness all around him till the whole world seemed to be of the very stuff of his own being.

There is something elemental and stark and even ferocious, in this quest for self-hood. Such a manifestation of individualism reminds one of a cycle of plant life:

*"Consider a plant—its life—how a seed fain to ground
sucketh in moisture for its germinating cells,
and as it sucketh swelleth, til it burst its case
and thrusting its roots downward and spreading them
wide*

*takeeth tenure of the soil, and from ev'ry raindrop
on its dribbling passage to replenish the springs
plundereth the freighted salt, while it pricketh upright
with its flagstaff o'erhead for a place in the sun,
anon to disengage buds that in tender leaves
unfolding may inhale provender of the ambient air:
and, tentacles or tendrils, they search not blindly
but each one headeth straightly for its readiest prey;
and haply, if the seed be fain in a place of darkness
roof'd in by men—if ther should be any ray or gleam
how faint soe'er, 'twill crane and reach its pallid stalk
into the crevice, pushing ev'n to disrupt the stones."*

This quotation will recall to the readers of Rabindranath the revealing passage in one of his letters in which he compared himself to a plant on the newly emerging earth.

"I can very well remember, ages ago when the young earth had just raised her head from her sea-bath and was greeting that day's just risen sun, I, coming from where no one knows and carried on the crest of the first wave of life, had shot up as a plant in her virgin soil. Then it was that on this earth I first drank the light of the sun with my entire body under the blue sky; I waved myself like a little child in blind but glad stirrings of life; I hugged my earthy mother

with all my roots and took my fill; my flowers blossomed and my shoots came forth in unreasoning delight."

It was not enough for Rabindranath's love of the earthly existence that he should absorb the world into himself through the senses; he wanted a closer contiguity. That contiguity, to his thinking, could be realized only through physical contact, and only such physical contact as plants have with the earth. It is not surprising that such passionate attachment to the earth should seek to assimilate all that there is assimilable in this world; it could be also expected to lead Rabindranath to attempt something more ambitious,—to seek to save his individuality from the vast welter of the collective existence of man, to make it an epitome of human life, a perfect microcosm in the macrocosm.

In this again we meet the contradiction noticed above between the mystic and the humanist Rabindranath. The true mystic thinks little of individuality and still less of worldly permanence. His existence is not separative but unitive, his trend is towards generalization and not individualization. Believing himself to be merged in the absolute, he has little use for those particular and relative manifestations which, piled layer on layer, constitute the existence of the individualist. To the mystic "ceaseless quest for the diuturnity of our memories into present considerations seems a vanity almost out of date, and superannuated piece of folly," not only because it is a contradiction to his beliefs to try to extend an existence whose death he daily prays for but also because for him true duration is not a relative property of matter, but an absolute thing, "which maketh pyramids pillars of snow and all that's past a moment."

V

BE that as it may, we have to take Rabindranath as he is, and cannot cast him into a pre-set mould, and that fact has a profound significance for a proper understanding of his artistic activity. As has already been said, the entire body of his artistic, intellectual, and even social activities is part of his quest for self-hood. He is not one of those magic master-minds in painting, music or poetry, who throw aside gems of art for man's regard or disregard in response to an urge they cannot help and once it is obeyed have no further preoccupation with the result. Cézanne, for example, put away his canvases once they were finished and never again looked at them. Rabindranath, one should imagine, proceeds on quite another line, and exactly remembers what mile-stone each of his works forms in the growth of his personality. This is not an uncommon happening with men of letters, whose studies go to form a personality no less than a book. In fact, Mark Pattison used to maintain that the most important product of study was not the book but the man. This attitude is, however, rarer among creative artists. But among these relatively rare instances must be included the case of Rabindranath Tagore.

A man whose creative and critical activity (with whatever it may be concerned—things of the mind or practical endeavour) merges into the process of creating and forming himself, and whose humanism is as wide as Rabindranath's, is bound to be both versatile and eclectic. Rabindranath's versatility and eclecticism are amazing. Not only do they include activities rarely ever undertaken by a single individual, but they also embrace emotional, ethical, and intellectual shades assumed to be mutually destructive or contradictory. Rabindranath's liberalism has not prevented him from giving one of the best expositions of Hindu conservatism from a philosophical standpoint, although his contempt for Hindu conservatism as popularly practised is well-known. He has felt alternately drawn towards asceticism and sensuous enjoyment of life, towards nationalism and internationalism, towards extreme sophistication as well as folk cultures and beliefs. In certain of his short stories, he has shown himself to be in perfect imaginative contact with certain types of life with which one should least have expected him to be familiar—for example, the life of the urban middle-class, on the one hand when at its most staid and commonplace and on the other when touched with internal corruption and decay.

VI

IF versatility is one side of Rabindranath's quest for self-hood, it has another characteristic aspect in the fact that he has all through his life been a rebel. He has received his share of loyal, and even fanatical, devotion from a small band of followers, but more often he has voyaged alone, in strange silences with his soul. One can go further and say that he has had to fight his way out through an environment stonily unsympathetic when it was not consciously hostile, so that with perfectly good a title he can call his life *My Struggle*. In fairness to his countrymen, let us however add that the bitterness of Rabindranath's struggle is owing as much to his own intractability as to commonplaceness, stupidity and lack of imagination in the society in which he was born and had to work.

*"Qui, l'œuvre sort plus belle
D'une forme au travail
Rebelle,
Vers, marbre, onyx, émail*

*Fi du rythme commode
Comme un soulier trop grand,
Du mode
Que tout pied quitte et prend!*

*Sculpte, lime, cisèle;
Que ton rêve flottant
Se scelle*

Dans le bloc résistant!"

I do not know whether Rabindranath has ever thought of these lines of Théophile Gautier in connexion with his poetic craft, but in shaping his life and personality he has certainly proceeded in a manner whose principle the lines sum up with perfect justice. He has not rhymed handily and obviously with his fellows, nor has he put his feet in shoes which were a little too large, so that every foot could get into and get out of them.

Modern psychology tells us that the desire to rise above one's environment and to achieve personal significance is universal, no one is above or below it. But here the difference in degree is as big as the difference in kind, and the common man's search for self-hood bears no proportion, qualitatively and quantitatively, to Rabindranath's. So uncompromising, so idealistic, and so demoniac in a sense has he been that he has not only driven himself hard but has also exasperated, distraughted, and trodden on the toes of the men among whom he has had to work. Naturally, they are almost as sore as he himself is, and as a result at times both malevolent and malicious.

Rabindranath's struggle against his environment started with his school days, and has continued. Any other man would certainly have been left morally scarred by it. It is not that there is not in Rabindranath, too, a strain of disillusioned bitterness. Certain sentences in his prose writings rasp out a lack of charity about his fellow-countrymen, which hurts and rankles. But these rare and passing moods do not mar the permanent serenity, courage, and magnanimity of his nature. That is due above everything else to the internal discipline of the man which has tempered an almost morbidly sensitive nature to an unwavering contemplation of life, and tamed his inherently anti-social philosophy of life, into a recognition of the existence and needs of other men. For one less chastened, a sensibility like Rabindranath's would have been a source of untold agonies. No one can say that Rabindranath has not suffered; it is all too evident in his life and works, but for all that he has gone through he has not succumbed to bitterness or frivolity, the two refuges of weak characters.

Truly, Rabindranth's anger is not for us, however much we have misunderstood him. He will not, like Dante, sleep in far-away Ravenna because Florence, his mother city, has been ungrateful. His indignation, his intolerance, his pen, his sword, are reserved for a higher crusade. Against tyranny and obscurantism of every sort he has nursed and nurses a hatred which resembles the implacability of a child made to suffer humiliation in silent un-understood anguish. It is these that he has hated with all the strength of his masculine hatred. It is only against them that he has all along been the great rebel. But no, that word does him an injustice, he has been more than a rebel, he has been a fighter, and a fighter without fear and without reproach.

My First Impressions of RABINDRANATH

By

PRAMATHA CHAUDHURI

BROWNING in one of his poems asks: "Did you see Shelley plain?"—I did see Rabindranath 'plain', for the first time, fifty-five years ago. His name at the time was familiar to me, but not his writings. In the summer of 1886 he came to see my late brother, Ashutosh Chaudhuri, who had just returned from England. We were living in Krishnagar at the time, and it was in our house there, that I first saw him.

My brother and Rabindranath started for England in the same boat in 1881, and it was as fellow-passengers that they came to know each other. Rabindranath was accompanied by his nephew Satyaprasad Ganguly, and they both came back from Madras for some reason or other; while my brother proceeded to England. But in these few days my brother had become an intimate friend of Rabindranath. That is why the Poet came to Krishnagar, and I had the opportunity of seeing him. I was then in my teens, and Rabindranath was twenty-five.

I was immensely impressed by his appearance. From my boyhood I was unusually sensitive to physical beauty. When I saw him, I felt that I had never before set eyes on a handsome man. He was fair and tall, and had a splendid figure and a remarkably beautiful face. His eyes were large, his nose was straight and his forehead broad and high. Such a combination of strength and beauty I had never seen before. I also noticed that his whole person was informed with exuberant vitality.

On this occasion I had no opportunity of talking to him. I had just recovered from a serious illness, and with my shaven head and emaciated face, I did not like to appear before strangers. Even if I had been my usual self, I would not have dared to engage in conversation with him. But I heard Rabindranath talk with my brother and

his companions from behind the purdah; and I was so deeply impressed by the cleverness and wit of his talk, that I felt myself a pigmy before this gigantic intellect. The coruscations of his spirit were as brilliant as they were effortless. I was overjoyed to find that he never used Calcutta jargon, that his language was as light as it was bright, and as refined as it was captivating. He impressed me from the very first as a superman, both in body and mind. I am not prone to admiration by temperament, but Rabindranath compels one's admiration. His personality is so overwhelmingly superior to that of the average man. We all pass in the crowd, but not he.

II

I AM talking of my original impression, which is still vivid in my memory. And the public has since discovered that my instinctive appreciation of his greatness was not unfounded.

I have known him rather intimately for fifty-five years, and have had no occasion to change my opinion. My impression of Rabindranath's greatness was akin to perception. It was born of half-intuition and half-observation. In a word, it was a revelation.

I have said that at that time I was not familiar with his writings. That does not mean that I had not read a line written by him. I came to Calcutta when I was a little over thirteen and stayed here for nearly three years. I had read his "*Bhagnahridaya*" (Broken-heart) when I was a student of the Hare School, and I must confess that the book did not appeal to me. It struck me as a monotonous and sentimental *Kabya* (poetry), although it contained one magnificent passage about the starry heavens. No Bengali poet had hitherto portrayed such a vision of the infinite and its awe-inspiring character. It was as new as it was

great. I speak from memory, and I hope it has not played me false.

Later in life I met in Leopardi a poem on the same theme, of great beauty and power. But in those days this Italian poet was unknown to me, and I believe Rabindranath was also wholly ignorant of Leopardi's poems.

I mention these facts to show that I first came to know Rabindranath in flesh and blood and not through his writings.

III

TODAY I shall refrain from saying anything about Rabindranath's poetic genius. I began by saying that I saw Rabindranath plain, and I want to confine my mind, as far as possible, to this first impression. People may accuse me of saying more about myself than the Poet. But that cannot be helped. I can only relate my own impressions, and not those of others.

I will mention only one other thing. At that time I also heard Rabindranath sing. In those days I was very fond of music, and used to associate with people who could sing and handle Indian musical instruments; and I knew the names of many *Ragas* and *Raginis*, and could also recognise them when sung or played.

Rabindranath sang a few songs,—a *tuppa* of Nidhoo Babu, one of his own recently-composed songs, and a Hindi song. His voice took me by surprise. It was a powerful tenor voice of extraordinary range. His style of singing was also quite different from that of others. It was practically free from interminable trills, and I felt that he had cultivated the *Dhrupad* style of singing.

Now-a-days his songs are constantly discussed. That he does not care for the classical style of singing *Kheyal* and *Tuppa*, is obvious. Vocal acrobatics are repugnant to him. But if *Dhrupad* and *Thumri* are considered to be classical, then his songs can also be called classical. Remember that I have used the term "classical". That this style is absolutely different from the new-fangled styles of *Kheyal* and *Tuppa*, must be obvious to all lovers of Indian music. *Bhajans* are never sung in the manner of *Kheyal* and *Tuppa*, because in *Bhajan* the words have a value of their own. Rabindranath's songs are full of significant words, and the *Dhrupad* style lends itself to their singing. Like his whole personality, his songs are characterised by indomitable vitality.

Reminiscences of RABINDRANATH

By

INDIRA-DEVI CHAUDHURI

REQUESTS for reminiscences of the Poet come pouring in from all sides. Every periodical—whether daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly—is having, or has had, its Special Rabindra Number, replete with articles from various writers on various aspects of his genius, and the only fear is lest they should unwittingly repeat themselves in the process. How difficult it must be to say different things at different times on one and the same subject. Though I have heard it said that once when Rabindranath was in Bombay, Sarojini Naidu presided at four meetings held in his honour, and spoke about him from different points of view each time. But then, there is only one Sarojini!

Memory, that fickle maid, (I suppose she is feminine) refuses to be coerced. If you jog her, she jibs, if you woo her, she flies; if you let her go, she browses. It is when you least expect it that scenes from the past live again in your imagination. But print and page wait for no man,—or woman either; so it is either now or never. It would seem in this case that even age is an advantage, as the older you grow the more memories you are supposed to store up.

Unfortunately, all these celebrations and contributions are overcast with the gloom of the Poet's illness, and we can only hope and pray that his splendid constitution and exuberant vitality will once more drag him and us out of the Slough of Despond, which is so foreign to his nature. 'Ananda' has been his watchword throughout his life. May 'Ananda' dwell with him evermore.

II

THIS much is true, that few people are now living, who have been so closely associated with Rabindranath since childhood as we have. He accompanied my parents to England, and some of our earliest memories are connected with those country, though they have become pretty hazy, owing to the distance of time. Where are they gone, the old familiar faces of those who were our constant companions at that time? Some are dead, some are living, but separated by a death-in-life estrangement that is almost worse. Verily, as my uncle says in one of his songs, even in this life we pass through many transigrations.

All that I can now recollect of England, apart from personal memories, are the songs my uncle used to sing to us, of which I have spoken elsewhere.

In fact, music runs like a thread of gold through all the past, and it is difficult to keep away from the subject. I remember my uncle accompanied us on the return trip home, after a stay in England of about two-and-a-half years and such a severe storm arose one day, that rails had to be prevented the crockery from falling and smashing. But



The Poet's second brother the late Satyendranath Tagore and his wife Janadanandini Devi With them and their children—Indira Devi and Surendranath—Rabindranath spent two-and-a-half years in England

children are supposed to be immune from sea-sickness. I also remember singing "The Last Rose of Summer" to the Captain, when all the other passengers were down,—but whether that was on this occasion or another, I am not quite sure. Fancy remembering that the names of the boats we travelled by were the *Oxus* and *Meinam* (probably belonging to the P. & O. Co.), a minor detail which only serves to illustrate the vagaries of memory. Are those leviathans still in existence, I wonder?

III

THOSE who are fond of children have to put up with a lot, as everyone knows, and presumably, the amount of their long-suffering and patience is the standard by which their affection is tested. We must have plagued my uncle a good deal in those days, but I don't remember his ever getting vexed with us. Probably we were not so extraordinarily naughty either, compared to the spoilt children one sees now-a-days!

When in Calcutta, we never stayed for long in the family house at Jorasanko, but when we did, we usually occupied the rooms on the second floor, which now belong to Rabindranath. On one such occasion I remember how cut up he was at the death of my uncle Jyotirindra's wife, of whom he was very fond and who was very fond of us too. The story goes that she was so simple-minded, that when one of her favourite nephews told her he had passed a certain examination in the "fourth division", she believed him implicitly and was about to arrange a feast in his honour, when some kind friend exposed the trick that had been played upon her! They were very fond of pets, and I remember the big cages full of birds that used to stand in the verandah, and the man who brought insects to cater for them, and the little pocket monkey that seemed to have a special aversion for little girls. I recall another occasion when all the ladies of the family were in a high state of excitement because Bankim Babu (Chatterjee) was coming to visit my uncles, and how they made frantic efforts to peep at the great man from behind the shutters; which shows how greedily they must have devoured his novels when they first came out. Has it been possible for the succeeding generation to capture that first fine rapture amidst the plethora of modern novels, as of everything else?



The Poet with his niece Indira Devi, Mrs P Chaudhuri, and his nephew the late Surendranath Tagore 1886

As a side issue, I suddenly remember our old *pundit*, Hemchandra Vidyaratna of the *Adi Samaj*, who came to teach us Sanskrit. He was a typical *Brahmin pundit* to look at, though somewhat stout; but as we kept nodding our sleepy heads most of the time, our proficiency in that divine language has remained somewhat limited. Also, his pronunciation (in the intervals of taking snuff) was most atrocious (may his soul rest in peace)! The Tagore brothers have always been great sticklers for correct Sanskrit pronunciation, and their voices also were naturally powerful and well-modulated,—ideal voices for singing, reciting and play-acting, in all of which they, especially Rabindranath, excelled. Hence, together with music, the drama also occupies a large share in our childhood's memories

IV

MY UNCLE, of course, had his own friends (though not many) and his own literary societies, to some of which I accompanied him. His tall, handsome figure crowned with long curly locks (at about the age of twenty-five), is familiar to the Bengali general public by now, thanks to there being so many pictures of him at all ages. How wonderfully well he takes, and what an exhibition could be held of his photographs alone! And what a cruel fate it is that has now shorn his magnificent head of its splendour, and deprived his glorious senses of their keenness!

He often accompanied us on our annual visits to my father in Bombay, and it was from Karwar, near Goa, that he came back home to get married. We lived mostly in different rented

houses in the southern quarter of Calcutta, and my uncle's family often came and stayed with us. In one such house the opera *Mayar Khela* was composed; in another *Visarjan* was read out to us and *Raja-o-Rani* staged by members of the family. The *Kheyal Khata* was another great institution, in which all and sundry were invited to set down their random thoughts. There are many entries in this *khata* in my uncle's beautiful handwriting, which now alas! has become the shaky ghost of its former self. Another family album which would, I am sure, prove of great general interest is the series of picture-riddles in which correspondence was regularly carried on for a long time between Simla and Calcutta. It is a lasting shame and regret that one book from each set is missing. My uncle always had a taste for drawing, now I come to think of it; but it was overshadowed by the sister arts and has only lately come into its own.

What else is there to say, that has not been said already by others, or by himself in his own inimitable language? —As my mother used to say, the Tagore brothers have written their own autobiographies and left nothing to be added. All that can be added is the fervent wish that his life-long *Sadhana* will not have been in vain, and that his countrymen will not allow his beloved *Visva-Bharati* to languish for want of support, but will strive to keep alive its traditions and atmosphere and ideals as far as possible, so that the desire of his heart and the ambition of his life may be fulfilled.

আছে মা, তোর মুখে স্বর্গের কিরণ,
 হৃদয়েতে উবার আভাস,
 খুঁজিছে সরল পথ ব্যাকুল নয়ন
 চারিদিকে মর্ত্যের প্রবাস।
 আপনার ছায়া কেলি' আমরা সকলে
 পথ তোর অঙ্কারে ঢাকি,
 কুহ কণা, কুহ কাজে, কুহ শত ছলে,
 কেন তোরে ভুলাইয়া রাখি।

অনন্তের মাঝখানে ঠাঁও মা আসি,
 চেয়ে দেখ আকাশের পানে,
 পড়ুক বিমল-বিভা, পূর্ণ রূপরশি
 স্বর্গমুখী কমল-নয়নে।
 আনন্দে কুটিয়া ওঠ শুভ স্বর্গোদয়ে
 প্রভাতের কুহুমের মত,
 ঠাঁও সায়াহ্নমাবে পবিত্র হয়ে
 মাধাখানি করিয়া আনত।

—From a poem addressed to Sreematee Indira Devi by his uncle Rabindranath in 1883, published in 'Kadi-o-komal'

RABINDRANATH TAGORE AT DRESDEN

By
RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE



—From a photo taken in Germany in 1926

IN 1926 the League of Nations had invited me to visit Geneva in order to have direct personal knowledge of its work, including that of its International Labour Organisation, as also to be present at the meetings of the League of Nations Assembly and the League Council that year. After staying at Geneva for as many days in September, 1926, as I thought necessary, I left for Berlin.

It takes about 22 hours to reach Berlin from Geneva. I left the latter town one morning at about 11, and reached Berlin the next morning at about 9. On the day of my arrival, which was a Saturday, Rabindranath Tagore, who was lecturing in various towns of Germany, was not at Berlin. He was to lecture and recite poems at Dresden on the Monday following, and his dramatic piece, *The Post Office*, was also to be played there in its German version. So I started for that town in the morning in the company of Mrs. Rathindranath Tagore and Mr. Arabinda Mohan Bose. Arriving there at about 1 P.M., we did not go at once to the hotel where the Poet was staying. He was to lecture in the evening, and the play was to come off after the lecture. So, we wanted to see the town first. It is an old town, the capital of Saxony, situated in a charming valley on the Elbe. It occupies both banks of the

river, the parts of the town on the left and right banks being connected by several bridges, of which the Albert Bridge is a masterpiece of architecture. On account of its architecture and splendid art collections, its artistic and educational reputation, public squares and gardens, and its charming promenade on the Elbe, Dresden had the reputation of being a pleasant and attractive town.

We finished our lunch at the railway station restaurant, and from there we went to see the famous picture-gallery, which forms part of the famous Dresden museum. When we had almost reached its entrance, a photographer, armed with a camera, suddenly made his appearance and politely asked us to stand in front of him for a short while. I told him that I was not Tagore but only a countryman of his; though the lady in our company was Tagore's daughter-in-law. He snapped us—perhaps because there was a Hindu lady in our company clad in the graceful *sari*. I asked him to send me a print to my Berlin address with a bill, which he never did.

The picture-gallery is one of the finest collections in Europe out of Italy and then (1826) contained about 2,400 paintings, mainly by Italian and Flemish masters. Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* is

considered the gem of the collection. It is kept in a separate room by itself in a sort of shrine, and is visited by large numbers of persons. The appreciation of some of them is purely aesthetic; but many almost adore it. Other masterpieces are Titian's 'Tribute Money' and Corregio's 'Magdalene' and 'Da Notte'. I did not like the fat nude women in some of the large Flemish paintings. I do not speak here as a puritan. The nude figures were not at all even artistic. As Mrs. Rathindranath Tagore is herself an accomplished artist, she would often draw my attention to some particularly fine specimen of painting. While we were going the round of the rooms, a German lady accosted me and said in English: "May I have your permission to speak to you for a few minutes?" I replied at once: "Certainly you may. But you have made a mistake. I am not Rabindranath Tagore, I am only a countryman of his. The Hindu lady with us is Tagore's daughter-in-law and an accomplished artist." Thereupon she said, pointing to her companions, who also were persons of her sex: "I thought so, but they insisted that you were Tagore." No one who has seen Rabindranath Tagore can mistake anybody else for him. The reason why this aged Indian with a long grey beard was mistaken for the Poet by some persons at the Venice railway station, then in Geneva at the

II

first meeting of the League of Nations Assembly in September, 1926, next twice at Dresden and, lastly, in the dining car of the railway train by which we were going from Prague to Vienna in the company of Tagore, who, being then indisposed, was resting in his compartment, was that it had become known all over the Continent that he was touring in Europe, and so it was thought by people who had never seen him or his portraits, now in this country or place, now in some other, that he was there. Owing to these mistakes the Poet once humorously proposed in Berlin that I should go to a certain town which he was to visit the next day and personate him and read out his lecture there!

From the picture-gallery we went to see the palace, an imposing building. But we were too late, it was then closed. But one part of it was open. It was the 'Green Vault', containing a valuable collection of precious stones, pearls and curios, and articles in gold, silver, ivory etc. One of the caretakers pointed out to us some of the gems which had come from India. India has enriched many a country and town but herself remains poor. The Public Library, the churches, the factories, etc., for which Dresden is famous, I had no time to see. I, however, saw an international exhibition of modern paintings which was then being held there. Artists from all countries of Europe and from America had sent their works there. I do not now remember whether Japan was represented but India was not. The collection was very large. The paintings were however, too modern for an old-fashioned man like myself who moreover cannot pretend to be an art critic or connoisseur. Though Mrs. Tagore and I could appreciate a few works of art I could not make out what real or imaginary objects or ideas many of them represented. I could only see that their colour scheme was striking. Within the same extensive area, there was also an international exhibition of gardening and of flowers. Models of many famous historical gardens, including at least one—I forget which—belonging to India were kept there. And there were other models suggesting how gardens might be planned. As for the flowers, they were one mass of colour. From the exhibition grounds we went by tramcar to the hotel where the Poet was putting up. The car was overcrowded many could have only standing room. But when I got into it, some of the passengers, including some girls, seeing an old man standing, stood up to make room for me. This politeness to an unknown old foreigner showed their good breeding.

WE went to the big hall where the Poet was to lecture, a few minutes before the time fixed. It could accommodate some three or four thousand persons. There was not a single unoccupied seat. Some persons had to remain standing. A large section of the audience consisted of women. Many men and women could understand what the Poet said in English. Others, the majority, understood the lecture from the translation in German delivered fluently in a sonorous voice by Pandit Tarachand Roy, Professor of Hindi in Berlin University. Each paragraph delivered by the Poet in English was followed by its German translation by the Pandit—a Punjabi gentleman. There were many reporters about half being women. The reporter who was obviously taking down the whole lecture verbatim was a woman. After the lecture, the Poet recited many of his English and Bengali poems. The lecture and the recitations were frequently applauded. His poems, particularly those from *The Crescent Moon* were highly appreciated so much so that he had to recite more poems than he had originally intended to do. I remember that he had to recite "Defamation", quoted below from *The Crescent Moon*, at least twice, if not thrice.

"Why are those tears in your eyes my child?"

How horrid of them to be always scolding you for nothing?

You have stained your fingers and face with ink while writing—is that why they call you dirty?

O, fie! Would they dare to call the full moon dirty because it has smudged its face with ink?

For every little trifle they blame you my child. They are ready to find fault for nothing.

You tore your clothes while playing—is that why they call you untidy?

O, fie! What would they call an autumn morning that smiles through its ragged clouds?

Take no heed of what they say to you my child.

They make a long list of your misdeeds.

Everybody knows how you love sweet things—is that why they call you greedy?

O, fie! What then would they call us who love you?"

III

WHEN the lecture and recitations were over, we made our way with difficulty through crowds of people to the theatre. On coming out of the hall where the Poet had lectured, we found the footpath so crowded that it took him and his companions some minutes to get into their cars, which had to move slowly through the streets thronged with crowds eager to have a look at him. When the conveyances reached the theatre, there was again some delay in entering it on account of the road and footpath in front of it being choked with jostling crowds. In the theatre also there was not an inch of space left unoccupied. Considering the unfamiliarity of the subject and of the *dramatis personae* the acting was creditable. Some of the dresses were rather funny. I do not, as I should not, say this in a fault-finding spirit, for Bengali male and female costumes are unfamiliar to Germans. I should rather congratulate the management of the theatre on having procured a palm-leaf umbrella for the Morol (মরোল) Bengali ornaments for Sudha, the bamboo carrier of curds for the curd-seller, etc. The part of Amal, the sick boy, was played by a young actress. At Prague also, both in the Czech and German theatres, actresses played that part. Everywhere, the parts of the boys also who came to play with Amal, were played by actresses. Both in Germany and Czechoslovakia the Poet asked why actresses played these parts. He was told that boys could not be had there to play these parts. Boys of Amal's age could not enter into his feelings and sentiments. It is different in Bengal and with Bengalis living outside Bengal. Some Bengali boys have played the part of Amal to perfection. I do not know whether *The Post Office* has been staged anywhere in India by non-Bengalis. So I cannot say whether non-Bengalis boys have played the part of Amal, and, if so, how. When the play was over, the proprietor or manager of the theatre read out a highly respectful and appreciative address to the Poet, who received an ovation also from the audience.

IV

IN the hotel where the Poet stayed, I found him, morning and evening, calmly and patiently autographing scores of some work or other of his, translated into German, and brought to him by strangers. The waiters and waitresses of the hotel were not behindhand in respectfully bringing him such books

for his signature—so cultured were even they. He had also to autograph packs of visiting cards of people quite unknown to him. So I suggested humorously that if he had fixed a fee for his autograph, he could have made some money. In reply he simply smiled and referred to the lack of business instinct in his mental make-up and to his failure to win the grace of the goddess Lakshmi.

It was not merely autograph-hunters who sought his favour. Artists of sorts were also in evidence. He yielded to the importunities of a portrait-painter who wanted only fifteen minutes' sitting to execute a pencil or crayon sketch of him. The first attempt of this artist was a failure. So, too, the second. The Poet gave him a third chance. When the man had finished, Rabindranath asked me, "Does it not look like Michael Madhusudan Dutt?" With that he autographed the portrait, which did indeed bear more resemblance to Madhusudan than to Rabindranath. Did

the Poet's question imply, one wonders, that there was no harm in admitting a portrait to be his own provided it was that of some poet?

FROM Dresden the Poet came back to Berlin. His daughter-in-law, Mr and Mrs Prasanta Mahalanobis, Prof Tarachand Roy, Mr P. C. Lal and myself accompanied him. In the train, Mrs Mahalanobis (Rani Devi) regaled the Poet with chocolates, which he enjoyed like a child. I must admit that I, too, had my share. During the journey the Poet said many things, grave and gay, worth recording in permanent form, but I am sorry I did not take any notes. Their flavour would be lost, if I attempted to give their mere substance from memory in English translation. Nevertheless, I venture to record two observations of the Poet

The epithets 'sujalam, suphalam, shasyashyamalam' in the "Bande Mataram" song, said he, could not be so appropriately applied to Bengal or all other parts of India in all seasons as to many parts of Europe. I had seen only a few regions of that continent. Of them the Poet's remark appeared to me to be correct. We have to compete with the people of those parts so favoured by Nature. It is a difficult but not a hopeless task.

Another thing which the Poet told us was that a European editor of note, a friend of his, had told him that the people of Europe were generally ignorant of things Indian and Indian affairs. So if he could get some reliable and well-informed Indian writer to write on contemporary Indian events and problems with the world situation as their context, his contribution would be published, and European readers would be able easily to understand the state of things in India.

TAGORE IN BERLIN: 1921

BERLIN, June 3, 1921.—Rabindranath Tagore the Indian Poet was here today. A beautiful specimen of the apostle with flowing hair and beard. More impressive in appearance than most of the conceptions of Christ. A slow, smooth, quiet voice, which rather charmed me. He has had a tremendous reception in Scandinavia and Germany. Helen [Lady D'Abernon, a daughter of Lord Rosebery, a former British Premier] went to one of his

—From 'The Diary of Viscount D'Abernon', British Ambassador in Berlin from 1920-26, Vol I, pp 179-80

readings yesterday, but not only could not get into the room but could hardly get into the street. So great was the crowd.

TAGORE says, he has talked with most of the intellectual here and finds the German mind looking about for some new philosophy. He had been greatly impressed by the depth of hatred against the French. He gave it as his opinion that the result

of the war had been a great course-ward of feeling throughout Europe, a great indifference to disorder and human suffering. To him all Europe is alike, one European is like another. European art and culture and our characteristics are similar. No European realises how much identity there is nor how small are the divergencies between countries whose main stock-in-trade consists of nationalistic antipathies.

EUCKEN AND TAGORE: TWO LETTERS

The following letters were exchanged between Rudolf Eucken, the great German philosopher and Rabindranath Tagore, when the latter visited Germany in 1921 and was staying with his friend Count Keyserling in Darmstadt —

[EUCKEN'S LETTER]

Jena,
June 11, 1921

DEAR SIR AND MASTER,

As I so greatly regret not to have had the chance of meeting you in Germany being hard pressed with work, I must send you hearty greetings and tell you how sorry I am. All the more so as I should like to assure you of my great sympathy towards your personality as well as for your noble work. We are both united through having the same aim, a thorough deepening and raising of mankind, this unavoidable mission may form itself differently in India and Germany but we shall agree in the chief aim. German life carries in itself a great lesson, a close combination of work and soul, the deepest characteristic feature of German mankind is to put its soul into work so as to be able to give the soul an aim of its own and then unite all in all and therewith to raise work to a high standard, which carries in itself a world of its own.

Now in this modern world, soul and work have gone asunder, our culture has become a one-sided culture of labour, and the soul has not sufficient power to put the whole of life into harmony.

At the same time we experienced the national and ethnic defeat, also the worry for the existence of our heavily pressed people. May the aspect of our life be ever so dim, we need not despair as misfortune shall not break our courage. In our German life there is an unfathomable deepness and a great capability of devotion, even after heavy blows the German nation has always found itself again and gained an ascent in spite of pain or sorrow, we trust in the power and love of the creating will-power of the world. This will-power of the world—WELTWILLEN—alone can give us a sense and value. We, however, must take up this

sense and value and develop it to the best of our ability. This living faith pierces the depth of German life, but now is the moment that one must exert all one's power for the great work, the saving of mankind and one's own people. Amidst these dangers and distresses it is a great pleasure and help to us to hear the voice of the noble Indian philosopher, thinker and artist and to be furthered thereby. Certainly there will be many things in the present German life which may not please you, the exterior often predominates, at the same time the surface of life is often dreadfully split up and the multitudinous movements often cross each other to the greatest opposition. All that however does not concern the last depth of German living, therefore, beg you heartily not to lose your faith in the German people and its labouring power. The mere ideal of power as it especially penetrates in English life does not suffice German people but demands a life's content and at the same time a firm connection with the intellectual totality and does not think psychologically but metaphysically and demands an inner revolution, a regeneration, and in this striving, German and Indian mode of thinking, can help and complete each other.

For us it is however a real pleasure, and we owe you much gratitude, that you came to us and gave us such a valuable sign of your sympathy.

May you kindly keep this sympathy for our German people and may I also have a personal share therein?

This is what I beg of you and with the hearty wish that Germany be present to you at heart,

I remain,

In devotion and hearty sentiment,

Truly yours,

RUDOLF EUCKEN

[TAGORE'S REPLY]

Nuremberg
Darmstadt
June 13, 1921

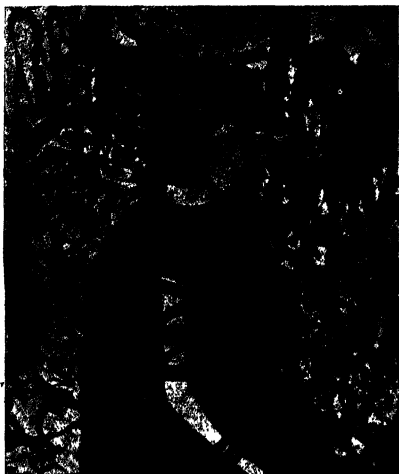
DEAR MASTER,

It has given me great delight to read your kind letter addressed to me. I had a desire to visit Jena and meet you there but my engagement at Darmstadt has unfortunately upset my plan, and it grieves my heart to leave Germany without seeing you.

It has been said in our scriptures that there are three ways of realising the Infinite according to the temperaments of individuals. These are through knowledge, through love, and through action. Their respective paths are philosophy, religion, and science. But owing to the distraction of selfish passions and want of detachment of spirit men almost everywhere have missed their chance and philosophy wrongly pursued, religion wrongly practised and science wrongly applied have brought upon us continual series of misadventures. It was the mission of Europe to inaugurate the era of Karma Yoga, the fulfilment of self through action. And therefore the vehicle on which she was to travel to her goal she is made to carry on her head. She has suffered and the world eagerly is waiting to see how she takes the lessons of her sufferings. If it be the destiny of Germany to go through the penance for the sin of the modern age and come out purified and strong, if she can know how to make use of the fire that has scorched her for lighting up the path to a great future, to the aspiration of soul for its true freedom, she will be blessed in the history of humanity.

I carry with me the most generous hospitality of heart offered to me by the people of this country and I leave behind me my love and sympathy for them.

Very sincerely yours,
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.



THE VISIBLE DREAMS *of* RABINDRANATH TAGORE

By

COMTESSE DE NOAILLES

IT is now ten years since I had the rare good fortune, which touched me to the heart, of taking a walk with Rabindranath Tagore on a cool evening, in a magnificent garden laid out in imitation of the East, on the banks of the Seine. The tall stature of the Poet clad in linen, his velvet tread on the golden gravel, his face of a prophet (who is not exasperated by, but accepts and shapes his destiny), his peaceful hands which appeared to have the power of enriching and consoling mankind, seemed a sufficient explanation of the rose-trees of Bengal lifting themselves proudly on the two sides of his regal walk!

How noble he was and unstinted, this wise man, in communion with himself, enigmatical and yet transparent, like the silver sea!

To-day, Tagore presents to our admiring gaze that immense part of his dream of which he had spoken already in his famous stanzas: "I comprehend the voice of the stars and the silence of the trees. One day, I would meet, outside myself, the joy which resides behind the screen of light . . ." Words of fire lighting



—With one of his drawings



—The Poet painting



up the whole future! Man takes time to attain to a clear knowledge of himself. Suddenly he knows, and then, again, he does not know. Tagore, the magician, who, with his fingers raised, without fear of any check, had attempted to pacify the furious winds, and who declares to have cured, with his intense will-power, the mortal sting of the scorpion, is timid before his creations, to the fineness and brilliance of which each one of us is a witness. We praise him quite naturally; as for him, he doubts, questions, hesitates and smiles.

*
* *

WHILE he had been writing his books interspersed with invisible stars, the pictorial work of Tagore crowded around him like a dancing multitude, not known to his reason, coming from all parts of the world to his happy island. Socrates taught the famous principle: "Know thyself". No doubt, daughter of the Greeks that I am, I would not repudiate this great precept which urges intelligence to be on its guard, to take its stand on logic, to put away from itself splendid dreams insistent on taking shapes in

created forms. But there is not one single commandment for the spirit. He, Tagore, has suffered the ecstasies of his universal soul to grow heavy and dull, has not used up his efforts to be nothing

but himself, has consented to see the break-up of the elements of which his dreams are formed,—and suddenly is presented to us a prodigious work, making him multiple and diverse. Behold his



intimate people, his secret inmates, his surprising multitude! Praised be the destiny which has caused brilliant new fruits to spring up on the tree whose roots had stretched out for a long time!

*
* * *

IT IS highly interesting to know how Tagore, an intelligent dreamer, had been led to his startling creations which charm the eye and make it travel in countries where the plausible is affirmed to be more true than the real! With his beautiful hand, of the colour of white dove, he wrote his poems, and in the margins of the manuscript, intoxicated suddenly by an ineffable elixir, he felt himself carried away far from the narrow and rigorous labour and handed over to the ungovernable forces of the imagination. He sketched, then developed, perfected the treasures of the unknown, a pupil obedient to a celestial guide. It is thus that he who possesses the gift of tears and weeps without knowing the cause of his regret, feels the mysterious dew forming on his face an

inexplicable network of liquid lace, gazed on by the angels.



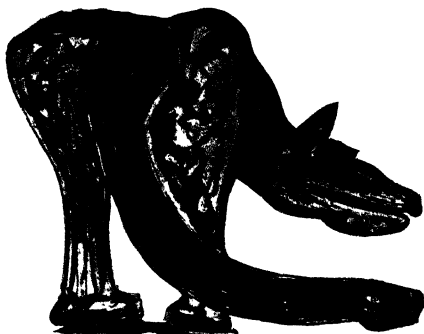
THE PICTURES of Tagore which begin like the entry of the spirit into sleep by dreamy and vague spirals, define themselves in the course of their remarkable execution, and one is stupefied before this masterly creativeness which reveals itself as much in the trifling as in the vast. The gloomy stain, the snowy white, the reds, the greens, the violets issue from limbs and reconstruct a living universe. Tagore, whose charming songs have whispered to us so many subtle affirmations, now presents to us the mystery of the multiplicity of man, of the plentiful ancestral influence, hastening on the feet of phantoms, with the laughter of the magicians!

We read in William James: "We do not possess the key to our reservoirs." Ah! How this sigh contains much more of certainties than of regrets.

Why has Tagore, the great mystic, suddenly, without knowing, set at liberty that which in him scoffs, banters and perhaps despises? Certainly, beauty has the greatest part in the designs and colours of the poet; the noble faces, the proud attitudes, the

grace of the world of waters, and such deep blue night where, it would seem, the happiest lovers of Shakespeare are gathered together, transport us to a paradise so substantial that it does away with the notion of death. But how are we not to dread those profiles of corpulent gluttons and sensualists with whom Cervantes made us acquainted? How are we not to have an unquiet heart before those satanic masques, lean, crimson, ghastly,—seen obliquely, sharp like the knife, appearing like incarnations of craftiness and joyful treachery? But, also, how charming it is to discover the cunning poise, cleverly obtained, of the two pigeons! How funny, illusive, in its posture of the coquette who drives desire to despair, is the antelope, suspended as it were, and how one would think it to be flying

—I love you and have more admiration for you, Tagore,



since when you made to us such rich and sometimes such cruel confidences; but, would I ever find again the great ingenuous angel that you were, when your silent feet

on the garden gravel, made me think of my sins, imaginary perhaps, and of your sublime innocence?

[—I translated from French]

—Foreword to the catalogue of an exhibition of Tagore's drawings and paintings held at Galerie l'igalle, Paris in May, 1930

MY PICTURES

By

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

AN apology is due from me for my intrusion into the world of pictures and thus offerings a perfect instance to the saying that those who do not know that they know not are apt to be rash where angels are timidly careful. I, as an artist, cannot claim any merit for my courage; for it is the unconscious courage of the unsophisticated, like that of one who walks in dream on perilous path, who is saved only because he is blind to the risk.

THE only training which I had from my young days was the training in rhythm, the rhythm in thought, the rhythm in sound. I had come to know that rhythm gives reality to that which is desultory, which is insignificant in itself. And therefore, when the scratches in my manuscript cried, like sinners, for salvation, and assailed my eyes with the ugliness of their irrelevance, I often took more time in rescuing them into a merciful finality of rhythm than in carrying on what was my obvious task.

IN the process of this salvage work I came to discover one fact, that in the universe of forms there is a perpetual activity of natural selection in lines, and only the fittest survives which has in itself the fitness of cadence, and I felt that to solve the unemployment problem of the homeless heterogeneous into an interrelated balance of fulfilment, is creation itself.

MY pictures are my versification in lines. If by chance they are entitled to claim recognition it must be primarily for some rhythmic significance of form which is ultimate, and not for any interpretation of an idea, or representation of a fact.

Tagore's Letters



By

DHURJATI PRASAD MUKERJI

VOLTAIRE is reputed to have flooded his world with letters. We marvel at this busy man's voluminous correspondence. Kings and Princes were proud to receive them and replied in their own hands. They were flattered by the fulsome praise in which Voltaire excelled and wrote back in honeyed words of their great debt and gratitude. Probably, another pen was used to kindle those who were ready to catch the flame that glowing brain. Those were glorious days when leisure called for the goose-quill and, therefore, epistles in the form of essays. Even a young man wasted two sheaves to get a guinea from an old aunt. Ideas required elaboration and style flourished in the process. In our own younger days, village kinsmen sent their Bijoya greetings in two pages of note sheets. We manage them now in set telegram-forms. The fact is that we have become slaves of time and lost our leisure. But there is a more important reason. Letter writing flourishes as an art in the hands of detached people during courtly but critical periods in history. In the days of conformity exegesis is the order: when values are being re-valued, letters release the surplus irresponsible energies involved in experiments and creation. Poetic tradition was being recast as a backwash of the French Revolution, when that supremely isolated individual, Keats, was privately maturing; and he poured himself out in that great series of letters which are as much a claim to his greatness as his Odes. Dr. H. Lawrence could not accept the mechanical and sophisticated civilisation of the day and scattered pell mell the seeds of new life. Even the delicate, shy, Katherine Mansfield gave in the pages of her letters the minutest reactions of her extraordinarily sensitive mind.

India, too, has had her reputed critical phases. In Bengal, the transformation of values was brisk. Nor was there any dearth of keen minds to realise what was happening. Yet, barring Tagore, no eminent man has been a great

letter-writer. Next to him comes Pramatha Chowdhuri, whose sparkling letters are a treasure to their recipients. Vivekananda's correspondence is full of vigour and high seriousness. But there the list ends. Surely, it is not the fault of the language. After Tagore, it is foolish to say that the language is not tractable for epistolary purposes. After "Birbal", you cannot say that wit, clarity and precision are barred out by our philology. The lapse is due to deeper causes than the absence of leisure. There is something wrong with our mental habits. We may be keen in intellect, but we are uncritical in intelligence. We are not sensitive and observant enough. Or is it that our phases have not been critical enough?

II

LOOK at Tagore's letters. Their first characteristic is that most of them are written from abroad to friends in India. Europe, Russia, Persia, Java, Japan, America are the venues. Excepting the famous Bhanu Singha's letters to a young girl, the majority of the letters written from India also are written from outside Bengal. This proves that even Tagore needs distance for detachment. The second feature is equally striking. Nearly all the travel-epistles are evaluating in tone. The poet learns the best in foreign cultures and simultaneously appraises them. English customs, Japanese manners, Japanese dance, Persian national endeavours, Russian collective farms and enterprises—the inwardness of all is intuitively comprehended along with their deficiencies. Originally, Tagore's travel-diaries were also letters. They betray a mind that is willing to accept and to reject on the basis of a standard, which is Indian culture as he would like it be in the light of its ancient heritage and modern contacts. The wider canvas makes his foreign letters impersonal and philosophical; but letters they remain in their intimate sensibilities, in the spirit of quick give and take, in the dynamics of the panorama which he observes, in the humour of the details that do not escape his eyes.

There is another batch of published letters that belongs to a different genre. I refer to *Bhanu Singha's Patra*

again. This volume, in my opinion, is unique. Tagore's capacity to enter into the minds of the child and the adolescent is unrivalled. Only a few months ago he has once more proved it beyond doubt by his *Chhele Bela*—a book that is even superior to Tolstoy's similar work. That capacity is in full play in Bhanu Singha's letters. Of course, the child who was the fortunate other party was herself a genius for her age. She had suggested amendments to the Poet's poems and tables! And the Poet bloomed out in response in all the glory of his wit, in the utmost delicacy of his sensibility. Subtlety in the simplest words and syntaxes makes a muslin of these letters. A shot muslin again, if that were possible, for colours chase each other with every change in the light-fall. No, these letters are not trifles. They are only the gods' play at the foot of Olympus on beds of asphodel.

III

I KNOW of an opinion that holds that Bhanu Singha's letters are the only genuine letters that the Poet has written. The reason for such a view is a supposition, which has been recently fostered by certain English critics, viz., that epistolary expression should be of the writer off his duties. A letter-writer, true to his genus, it is held, is an artist in *mufti*. A presumption like this is neither historically or aesthetically

valid. Abeldar's letters are as grave as Henry James's or Flaubert's. The aesthetic point involved here is whether or no there is a difference between seriousness and heaviness. It is not simply a question of taste. By these comments I do not suggest that it is not possible to produce beautiful letters without a philosophical approach and serious view. But such letters do not survive. They please the passing moments. Letters need not be personal to be charming. If the personal element comes in, human relationship is easily established—that's all.

But I have not so despaired of human nature as to think that it is constantly seeking physical contacts. Who does not know that personal, private, light touches have been recently held to be the tests of good essays? I wonder that Bacon and Emerson would have thought of this opinion that takes E. V. Lucas and Robert Lynd as master-essayists. *The Essays of Elia* are not exhausted by the Roast Pig. Similarly, Keats did not exhaust himself in his letters to Fanny Browne. Cowper will be quoted. But I have always looked away from the sight of the Stricken Deer. So Tagore's letters are great, because they are serious without being heavy; because they show the inner working of a great mind. They are an integral part of his genius. They have been generously bestowed on all sorts of people, including a Viceroy, and they are all treasured. From them have evolved his paintings—but that is, as Kipling would say, another story.

"THE POET'S REPUBLIC": A TYPICAL TAGORE LETTER

PLATO threatened to banish all poets from his Republic. Was it in pity or in anger, I wonder? Will our Indian Swaraj, when it comes to exist, pass a deportation order against all feckless creatures who are pursuers of phantoms and fashioners of dreams, who neither dig nor sow, bake nor boil, spin nor darn, neither move nor support resolutions?

"I have often tried to imagine the banished hordes of poets establishing their own Republic in the near neighbourhood of that of Plato. Naturally, as an act of reprisal, His Excellency the Poet President is sure to banish from the Rhymers' Republic all philosophers and politicians. Just think of the endless possibilities arising from feuds and truces of these rival Republics—peace conferences, deputations of representatives, institutions of busy secretaries, and permanent funds, having for their object the bridging of the gulf between the two adversaries. Then think of the trivial accident, through which a hapless young man and a melancholy maiden, coming from the opposite territories, meet at the frontier, and owing to the influence of the conjunction of their respective planets fall in love with each other.

"There is no harm in supposing that the young man is the son of the President of the Philosophers' Republic, while the maiden is the daughter of that of the Poet's. The immediate consequence is the secret smuggling of forbidden love-lyrics by the desperate youth into the very heart of the com-

mentaries and controversies of the two contradictory schools of Philosophy—the one professed by the yellow-turbaned sages, proclaiming that *one* is truth and *two* is an illusion, and the other, which is the doctrine of the green-turbaned sages, asserting that *two* is truth and *one* is an illusion.

"Then came the day of the great meeting, presided over by the Philosopher President, when the panlitis of the two factions met to fight their dialectic duels finally to decide the truth. The din of debates grew into a tumultuous hubbub; the supporters of both parties threatened violence and the throne of truth was usurped by shouts. When these shouts were about to be transmuted into blows, there appeared in the arena the pair of lovers who, on the night of the full moon of April, were secretly wedded, though such intermarriage was against the law. When they stood in the open partition between the two parties, a sudden hush fell upon the assembly.

"How this unexpected and yet ever-to-be-expected event, mixed with texts liberally quoted from the proscribed love-lyrics, ultimately helped to reconcile the hopeless contradiction in logic is a long story. It is well known to those who have had the privilege to pursue the subsequent verdict of the judges that both doctrines are held to be undoubtedly true: that *one* is in *two*, and therefore *two* must find itself in *one*. The acknowledgement of this principle helped to make the intermarriage valid, and since then the two

Republics have successfully carried out their disarmament, having discovered for the first time that the gulf between them was imaginary.

"Such a simple and happy ending of this drama has caused wide-spread unemployment and consequent feeling of disgust among the vast number of secretaries and missionaries belonging to the institutions maintained, with the help of permanent funds, for the preaching of Union—those organizations which were so enormously perfect in their machinery that they could well afford to ignore the insignificant fact of their barrenness of results. A large number of these individuals gifted with an ineradicable passion for doing good are joining the opposite organizations, which have their permanent funds, in order to help them to prove and to preach that two is two and never the twin shall meet.

"That the above story is a true one will, I am sure, be borne out by the testimony of even the august shade of Plato himself. This episode of the game of hide-and-seek of one in two should be sung by some poet; and therefore I request you to give it, with my blessing to Satyendranath Datta [the famous Bengali poet, greatly loved and admired by Rabindranath Tagore. He has since, unfortunately, died] that he may set it in those inimitable verse forms of which he is a master, and make it ring with the music of his happy laughter."

—From "Letters To A friend".

A LETTER TO WILLIAM ROTHENSTEIN

Ramgarh, Kumaon Hills,
June 2, 1914.

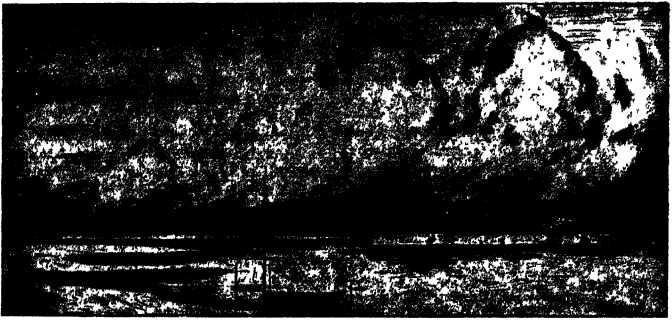
MY DEAR FRIEND,

Your letter gave me great joy, because it is your letter and because I got it when I had regained my peace of mind after the kindly care of the Father Himalaya. I have been wishing every day since I came here that you were here. This is just the place in the world for you. My house here will wait for you even if it is in vain. I cannot imagine that you will never visit Sentimiketan and this little nest of ours among the hills. It seems perfectly absurd to think that you have never seen Sheldah and never lived in boats with us in the

lonely sandbanks of the Padma. But, my friend, if you fail to come to share with me this feast of colour and light and love, you will have to pay for it in your next birth. I do not know what your punishment will be—possibly you will have the heart of a Yogi and yet be born again and again in those who have had the privilege to pursue the subsequent verdict of the judges that both doctrines are held to be undoubtedly true: that *one* is in *two*, and therefore *two* must find itself in *one*. The acknowledgement of this principle helped to make the intermarriage valid, and since then the two

I have shared with you the silence of the sunset sky in that beautiful terrace at Oakhill Park, but I came to you like an apparition blurred and out of focus—at best like a statue, somewhat unreal, because bereft of all atmosphere. Do you not think it is unfair to me, and that you should bring me out of the canvas world by Rabindranath placed me while sending me overseas—that you should hold me in the light turning me round to have a fair valuation of my personality?

Very affectionately yours,
RABINDRANATH TAGORE



SHUDDHAH IN SUMMER AT THE PRIOD
WHEN THE POET RESIDED THERE

Redrawn for the "Gazette" from
sketches made then by the writer

"MY RABINDRANATH"

AN INTROSPECTION

By

J. N. BOSE.

IT was many years ago. To the Jorasanko residence of the Poet came a joyous lad, humming an indistinct tune, his upper lip, adorned with the faint dawn of a moustache, quivering with emotion. The lad was an enthusiastic autograph-hunter. He had come with certain hopes and with a sprinkling of the ego so natural at his age. The Poet had no time to see him, instead, he wrote his name on a piece of note-paper and sent it down to the lad. That was only half success. The lad's vanity was hurt, for he had come with the idea of holding an intimate conversation with the Poet, incidentally to display his wisdom, another name for ignorance. But he was glad to possess the signature, although not in his cloth-bound little book.

Circumstances, a few years later, brought this lad, grown then to youth, into close contact with the poet and with his family.

IT was a summer's day. The projecting stones on the Calcutta streets, for tar macadam was then unknown, were throwing back the burning rays of the sun mercilessly into the eyes of pedestrians, coachmen, and half-hooded horses dragging heavy iron-tyred hackney carriages. Such a carriage stopped at the door of the young man's residence in the early afternoon and Rabindranath,

alighting gently, came in. Entering the room he was surrounded instantly by the members of the young man's family, who welcomed him with cordial greetings. On every face was an inexplicably expectant smile. But on the face of Rabindranath, the consummate actor, there was a look of consternation. In a vibrant, but almost hushed voice, he asked the young man, "When did I borrow this money from you? If I did I must repay." The young man looked aside with a mysterious grunt. Some of the young audience chuckled. Then, slowly, Rabindranath produced from a capacious recess in his beautiful flowing robe, a note of hand in which the Poet promised to pay a thousand rupees on demand! It was a clever piece of forgery, for the young man was a bit of an artist. The note was on the autograph-sheet gathered some years ago, and the signature, therefore, was genuine. It bore a date of the last month of the Bengali year. Neatly, in pencil, Rabindranath had written the words, "First April", under that date.

The bubble having burst, there was laughter all round, and it was subdued

only when Rabindranath said, "Well, I knew the joke, but I also knew that it was an invitation, and, behold, I am here!" I will repay you all, in due course." Then followed his music, with interludes of cold *sharbet*. The songs he sang were his own, of course, and sung in that gloriously sweet and virile style, which was his unique gift. The old harmonium, euphemistically called an organ, remained unopened at its corner, for the poet never could stand its unresponsive categorical notes. His own voice created the music, created the atmosphere, and what an atmosphere!

The sun had gone down. The pleasant south breeze was sweeping over the broad street, bringing peace and comfort with it. But the greater joy was in that musical atmosphere. After the Poet had left, the members of the young man's family remained silent for a while, engrossed in beauty and melody. This was the story with which the "young man", now mature in years, opened the conversation when I approached him to tell me something about Rabindranath.

"RABINDRANATH", he said, "is a stupendous personality composed of countless complexes, and you can hardly describe him. Try it, if you like. You begin by saying that he is

a poet; then you hasten to add that he is a story-teller, a composer and singer of songs, a teacher and educationist of uncommon patience and discernment, a director of fundamental thoughts, a creator of language and styles, a something or other. In reality, you can only see him from a single angle for the moment, realising instantly that there are many other angles of which you must take cognisance. You multiply substantives and adjectives, you go on elaborating one aspect or another, till you are either baffled or self-satisfied. Indeed you can perceive him only to the extent of your own projected consciousness, limited by the scope of your knowledge. And many a person, under such a condition, have tried to judge him, criticise him, or praise him. In most such cases they have ended in failure, even often without knowing that they have. I have seen others who were hide-bound in 'isms' trying to put him in a category. Their failure was ignominious,—only their anger expressed itself in calling Rabindranath futile, contradictory, even worthless. Rabindranath is such an intricate product of synthesis, created by both his inheritance and self-culture, that he defies analysis. Yet, without the help of the analytical process, minds like yours and mine can hardly expect to realise Rabindranath. And all the while the real Rabindranath is perhaps eluding us, smiling in the crimson dawn or the orange-brown dusk of Santiniketan.

"Well, then, I'll tell you something about my Rabindranath. You need not take the slightest pain to ascertain whether the touches in my portrait conform to the reality of the subject, for my picture is entirely my own. It is an introspection.

"About the time of the autograph-note-of-hand incident, Rabindranath came to our house one morning, radiant, yet reserved, as usual then. It was a time of his extreme mental concentration, as I shall tell you presently. In his hand was a book. I was engaged, at the moment, in giving a final polish to my shoes, a habit I maintained for many years for the sake of an aesthetic appreciation of cleanliness. I got up and bowed, shoe in hand. He smiled and said, "Now, leave that shoe; there may be meanings other than respect when one bows with a shoe in hand. Instead, take this book and give yourself a mental polish." The book was Herbert Spencer's *First Principles*. 'Read the book,' he said, 'as an index to knowledge, as a means to an end, not as the end itself'.

"SOON after this, one day, I was accompanying him down the Goral river. We were coming from Sheldah, where, as you know, the Poet resided for several years in almost perfect seclusion. We were coming to Kustia to catch the train. The little white painted 'green boat' glided like a swan on the crystal clear blue-green summer waters of the Goral. The air was still, the light was brilliant. The almost imperceptible ripples reflected tiny diamonds from patches on the water where the sun struck them at the proper angle. The atmosphere was ethereal, and one practically forgot the boat, the train, and even Calcutta, the destination. I was really taking a journey more intellectual than physical. I told him that

"THE POET smiled. It was the same smile, conceivable at fleeting moments, which illuminated the benign faces of the *Rishis*, the seers of our ancient world, when they sat down to enlighten their pupils in the shades of their *Asram* groves.

"All this happened at the commencement of the century. Modern atomic physics had not even been seriously thought of. Yet I heard a discourse on the gigantic powers stored up in, and frequently released from, the kernel of the minutest particle of matter. The biggest conglomeration of them behaved also in harmony, not in divergence. That not mere force, but consciousness as well, might dwell in all things. That quality itself might be the foundation of



RABINDRANATH AS HE LOOKED WHEN THE WRITER FIRST MET HIM

I had read Spencer, and it had left me with a void. It had made me realise that I knew so little of facts themselves not to speak of the principles. My mind was in a state of turmoil. Yet, almost childishly, I wanted to know the fundamental realities of the universe, and that too in double quick time. Could he explain, for instance, how I could joint the inanimate nature with the animate?

everything conceivable. That even beyond quality there might be an entity of unification, perhaps bereft of all attributes.

"If Herbert Spencer was one of the foretellers of the process of Evolution, which Lamarck and Darwin later made perfect, Rabindranath was the foreteller of modern physics. Indeed he was more. He was the foreteller of the philosophical background of science, of

which only a faint glimpse is being perceived today. He was still greater, for he signified the ultimate spiritual reality, call it the inexplicable symbolical value of the unknown quantity, if you like.

"That discourse in the little green-boat on the Gora opened the golden gate for me. Don't you see, my Rabindranath is ever the *guru*, the teacher pre-eminent?

"I WAS telling you of the period of utmost concentration in his life. Such it was as I saw it. It was at Shelidah that he retired for quiet contemplation. That, perhaps, is the process through which every genius must pass, a genius, who has to give a message to humanity, who has to bring hope to the forlorn. Thus did Buddha and Christ retire, thus does the modern scientist shut himself up in his laboratory. Such a period is one of discipline, or organising thoughts, of deciding upon a course of action. Rabindranath had decided to take action. We see the effect in the great institution, the Visva-Bharati, of to-day. It had a slender beginning, you know, but the idea and the ideal have always been there. They had their genesis at Shelidah.

"He was staying for a few days, during this period, at Giridih, with his friend the late Mr. Srischandra Majumdar, himself a literary man. It was in the evening, and the sun had just gone down beyond the distant hills. The dust in the air was tinged blood-red. He came out of his room looking agitated. The red glow caught his flowing curls and beard. His eyes had a far look. We were on the lawn, a rather noisy crew, including his son Rathindranath and Mahara-Kumar Brajendra Kishore Deb Barman of Tripura, trying to convince Mr. Majumdar that he looked ten times better after I had trimmed his beard in the French style that morning. As the Poet arrived we became silent. He declared that he had settled about the school at Santiniketan, and he was going to Calcutta that instant to consult a few educationist friends on certain points. He was off, catching the out-bound train by almost a fraction of a minute. When he returned a few days later, we read the signs of contentment and relief in his beaming countenance.

"It was a dynamic action, this sudden departure for Calcutta for consultation. It was induced by the concentration through which he had passing during this period. It was not a whimsical action, although we may love to call it so, particularly in the case of a poet.

He took it because nothing that he has done has ever been a halfway measure. He is thorough, and he apparently takes infinite pains to achieve a result. Only in his case he is unconscious of the effort or of the pain, for he has not to grope about as we do. His almost superhuman intellect gives him a discernment, which, in the absence of any other adequate expression, I would describe as akin to clairvoyance.

"And when the decision about the establishment of the institution at Santiniketan was taken, a lady, whose interest in the Poet was great, asked him if he had considered the matter well, at any rate its financial aspect. The Poet replied that such an affair as he was embarking upon, was not like a commercial undertaking. There was no question of making profits, unless the dissemination of knowledge and the formation of character of children were by themselves considered profits. Again, no such venture as he was contemplating was ever brought to success by calculations. I came to know, however, that this lack of calculation had made the Poet give practically his all for the cherished cause. It had also made that gentle and benevolent lady, his wife, contribute her all as well for the cause of her husband. Will Bengal be ever grateful and remember this?

"His concentrative days at Shelidah, were, to my mind, also the days of virile expression of his genius. Almost speechless, he would devote himself to ceaseless work, from dawn to dusk and often far into the night. Occasionally he would relax and give us a reading of his poems and prose writings. He would sing us his wonderful songs of those days, the cadence and melody of which would make us dumb with admiration and joy. And sometimes he would explain to us the significance, the underlying facts and principles, of his own writings, of those of the great poets and authors, of scientists and philosophers. That was real teaching. Not only the matter, but the mode also, was illuminating and inspiring. The analogies and imageries, the precise facts and inevitable logical conclusions, kept us spell-bound.

"WELL, I have seen Rabindranath in other aspects, but always as a teacher.

"A young man whom he befriended, stole his books. He was excused. A servant pilfered his clothes, his services were retained. Several men 'borrowed' money from him, and after a short

period of absence, reappeared to borrow again. Their request was granted. Numberless persons vilified him in the name of criticism. They were never unwelcome. Unthinking men often trod on his toes. The pain was borne with a smile. Never did I hear him decry the culprit. The man did not matter. Indeed he was an object to be redeemed if possible. But in no instance did I ever find him making a compromise with the crime, sin, lapse or even negligence. There his wrath expressed itself in terrible fury. The iniquity was condemned without mercy. It was a repetition of this same phenomenon when he wrote to the Viceroy relinquishing his Knighthood, after the Jalianwallabag incident. The letter had no reference to men, but the condemnation of the act was terrible. On occasions like this I returned home with an object lesson, but my silent sympathy went to the Poet who suffered so much on account of such iniquities. Yet at times I thought that perhaps those sufferings were inevitable for teachers, for their object was to make men better.

"I have seen Rabindranath under the shadow of calamities. It pains me to recall the occasions even at this distance of time for the sores in my heart are still raw. Every man is natural, and either at his maximum or minimum, in the presence of death. Rabindranath has suffered the loss of some of his near and dear ones. Saturated with grief he undoubtedly was, but indomitably firm in outward expression. How his mind worked, nobody can now tell, not even perhaps he, but there was the sign of resignation, born out of a living faith in his Providence. His minimum in the presence of death was always great, his maximum great beyond the range of any yard stick of yours or mine. Sitting silent by his side in sympathy and humility, I realised on these occasions what superhuman strength of endurance worked in his bosom. Rabindranath is as brave as he is great.

"YOU, who have studied the Poet's writings threadbare, have heard his speeches, listened to his songs, followed his career to the minutest details as under a microscope, you realise, perhaps fractionally even then, the multiple personality of this unique great man of this age. You call him the inspirer of the modern thoughtful humanity, you call him a great balancing factor in an unequal weighing scale, you call him the revealing co-ordinator of things Western and Eastern. Perhaps you are

right. But, to me it appears that you still leave important factors out.

"You have seen Rabindranath marching in glory over the world, in the veritable manner of an Emperor, not as a conquering tyrant, but as a great teacher, the bearer of a new message and the prophet of a new culture. You have stared in wonder when this same Emperor blended his perceptions in the realisation of the little pleasures and pains of the humble peasant.

"You are struck dumb by the versatile knowledge of this self-made man. From astronomy to biology, from the intricacies of the linguistic structure of Sanskrit to the almost inconceivable refinements of the teachings of the Upanishads, you find him perfectly at home anywhere and at any time. In poetry and in prose, in Bengali and in English, in all his writings, you discover this versatility, that is to say, if you have the clue to such knowledge. The vibrations of his music reach the uttermost regions of even the unknown nebula, as they stir up the innermost recesses of your individual soul. Time and space seem to vanish, they retain no meaning. Only you are full of a kind of inexplicable and intense joy. I tell you, even if everything is forgotten in the unknown future, the Poet's songs will still continue to inspire, chasten and soothe our great-grand-children removed a thousand generations forward. Rabindranath has achieved immortality.

"I read the accounts of a traveller in distant Iceland. Walking all day and worn out with fatigue, he arrived at the door of a clergyman in a remote village, a village consisting of a few huts at the furthest limit of the world, where com-



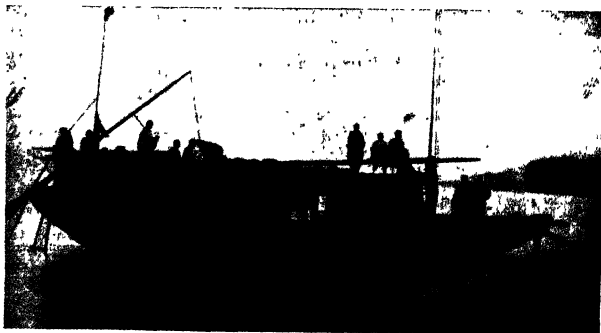
THE 'KUTHI-BARI' AT SHELIDAH—THE POET'S RESIDENCE

munication was almost absent. After being welcomed and fed on frugal fare, the traveller was astonished to find in the 'library' of the clergyman a set of Rabindranath's works. I was astonished to learn that the words of the Poet had broken down geographical and racial boundaries even where man is scarce. They had touched the fundamental chords of humanity. It was a queer sensation, for I felt that both the clergyman and I were reading Rabindranath and thinking of him together. Through such an agency man can become a friend of man even when strife is unbridled.

"MANY more years elapsed. After over three decades I found myself at Santiniketan, on an almost accidental visit. I was practically compelled to accompany a friend, loved and honour-

ed by me, and who is also a friend of the Poet and his family. The Poet was sitting on the verandah of 'Udayan' (the residence). His Secretary announced the arrival of my friend and of a certain person (here he pronounced my name in a little distorted way, unfamiliar to the Poet). I was behind my friend, on purpose, and outside the Poet's direct view. As he greeted my friend, I appeared and, bowing down, took the dust of his feet. The instant he saw me, he cried out, without restraint, without study, without the least trace of any assumed formality, 'Oh, is that you,' and called out to me by my old familiar name. The rest was an emotional breakdown on my part, and you need not hear of it. Perhaps the Poet too was not unmoved. He is so intensely human.

"Two days later we were at lunch. The Poet's daughter-in-law had procured some *hilsa* fish, knowing my weak-



—THE POET'S BOAT ON THE RIVER PADMA

ness for the commodity, a rarity at Santiniketan. She was coaxing me to eat more, as I was telling her how her mother-in-law made me eat the fish to my heart's content at Shelidah. The Poet was at the head of the table listening to the glowing description of my escapades in bygone days. Then suddenly, with a reminiscent smile, he said, 'Yes, you know, *Bouma*, (addressing his daughter-in-law) it must be said that I have treated him (me) right royally to *hilsa* fish; also to many other things, including the *kirtan* (song) in *Bhairabi* (the tune). And without the loss of an instant he sang, 'Oh, thou lord of my life, thou, not easily attainable (even) by devotion—'. He sang only a few lines. Tears unchecked and unashamed flowed down my cheeks.

Through the haze I could perceive the glistening moisture in the Poet's own eyes. He was thinking of days gone by. I was translated decades back. The lunch ended abruptly. Silently we departed, each to his room.

"THE supreme human element in Rabindranath is, to me, the quintessence of his life. This element is not soft sentimentality. It is the powerful capacity to understand and embrace all things human, to regard them in their true perspective, and to extend to them the brimful cup of sympathy. I yield to none of you in my regard for him, but my love for this lovable man is a thousand times greater than my regard.

"Now, I have told you something of my Rabindranath, as I have created him. My picture is that of introspection, as I told you before. My stock-taking is my own, not that of Rabindranath or of you. He may, in reality, be different. Your own Rabindranath may also be something else. But I am not disturbed. If mine be an illusion, I tell you, there is joy in that illusion. And I want to close my eyes with the possession of that joy untarnished."

The narrator become silent, and I had not the heart to break his silence; I left him even without saying good-bye.

I know this day will pass,

This day will pass—

That one day, some day,

The dim sun with tender smiling

Will look in my face

His last farewell.

Beside the way the flute will

sound,

The cows will graze on the

river-bank,

The children will play in the

courtyards,

The birds will sing on.

Yet this day will pass,

This day will pass.

This is my prayer,

My prayer to Thee :

That ere I go I may learn

Why the green Earth,

Lifting her eyes to the sky,

Called me to her ;

Why the silence of the Night

Told me of the stars

Why the Day's glory

Raised waves in my soul.

This is my prayer to Thee.

When Earth's revolutions

For me are ended,

In the finishing of my song

Let me pause a moment,

That I may fill my basket

With the flowers and fruits of

the Six Seasons ;

That in the light of this life

I may see Thee in going,

That I may garland Thee in going

With the garland from my own

throat—

*When Earth's revolutions for me
are ended.*

RABINDRANATH

an

THE POLITICAL AWAKENING

in

INDIA

By

SURESH CHANDRA DEB

I

RABINDRANATH TAGORE has completed eighty years of life in this world. In an address delivered on the Bengalee New Year's Day (14th of April last) he indicated the change that had taken place both in his own attitude and in the psychology of his people during these years. Our poet has struck a note of pessimism, and well he might when he surveyed the betrayal of human hopes and the disruption of the order of things that for about two centuries had been holding together the various elements in this country. He has been a witness to this vast transformation in our country, to the various ways in which forces, conscious and unconscious, influences, personal and impersonal, alien State policy and national policy, have acted and reacted on one another, and sought to remake this country of four hundred millions of people in the pattern of their own imaginings.

Only three years before Rabindranath opened his eyes to the light of day in this land "gleaming with the golden glory of the sun", had been defeated the attempt of "the supporters of the lost cause of the Marhattas and the Moghuls" to regain control over the machinery of State from the hands of the British. That attempt gave notice to the new rulers that they needed to be particularly careful in handling people who appeared to be as clay in the potter's hand. The generation of educated men, English-educated men, which preceded Rabindranath had begun to question and criticise British methods

of administration and enlightenment introduced into India.

From certain points of view this class appeared to fulfil Macaulay's hopes that the system of education he was inaugurating would produce a race of men "Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect", prepared to do battle on behalf of "Anglicism" as against the norms and forms of Eastern life. They rebelled against the traditional life and conduct of their countrymen, and appeared to concentrate all their criticism and condemnation on the crudities and morbidities in India's social and religious institutions. But this habit once acquired soon learns to spare no authority, sacred or profane. The socio-religious revolt in the Indian *intelligentsia*, encouraged so enthusiastically by the members of the ruling race, presaged an order and quality of mind that soon showed itself to be less disposed to regard an executive order as a decree of Providence, and appeared to be more conscious of positive rights secured by statutes and enforceable in law. As in other fields of activity and development so in this Raja Ram Mohun Roy was the pioneer in helping the evolution of a watchful and openly organised political life in India. Around him gathered men who fought for justice and equity in society and State, organised themselves for the redress of the grievances of their people and the assertion of their rights as citizens. At that time and for a long time after, these rights were spoken of as

inhering in British citizenship. But soon they came to be claimed as "rights of men." Raja Ram Mohun Roy accepted British rule as a period of tutelage. But he could foresee a time when Britain would prefer or ought to prefer to have India "as a willing province, an ally of the British Empire" than "troublesome and annoying as a determined enemy."

Among the co-workers and followers of Raja Ram Mohun Roy are to be found names which belonged to the Tagore family. Rabindranath's grandfather, Dwarka Nath Tagore, was one of them. His father, Devendra Nath Tagore who is known as "the Maharsi", was the first Secretary of the British Indian Association, an organization of the landlords in Bengal who were "notoriously outspoken and independent in their utterances", to quote the testimony of Sir Richard Temple, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal during the seventies of the last century. Raj Narayan Basu, maternal grandfather of Aurobindo Ghosh, refers in his autobiography to a characteristic of Rabindranath's father - his avoidance of Europeans which represented a phase in the evolution of Indian Nationalism:

"Devendra Babu is . . . averse to intimate relation with Europeans, because there existed a difference between him and Europeans in relations to the matters pertaining to India . . . Principal Lobb of Krishnagore once wrote to a paper: 'The proud old man does not condescend to accept the praise of Europeans'."

It was into this inheritance in things material and things spiritual that Rabindranath was born. And as he grew in years he grew up in an atmosphere of returning self-respect that had begun to vibrate in the Indian air, as the principles and practices of British administration stood revealed in their racial arrogance. By that time leaders of Indian Society had been able to throw off a part of their apologetic attitude with regard to their social and religious institutions. By the middle of the 19th century the "discovery of Sanskrit" by the West enabled her scholars to reconstruct Indian history and throw over the life and conduct of the Indian people a halo of dignity and wisdom in painful contrast to that of their present life. As an instance the founder of the Communist philosophy can be quoted as

অদেবী সমাজ

[পাঠক দয়া করিয়া নিজের অভিপ্রায়মত এই নিয়মাবলী পরিবর্তন, পরিবর্জন ও পরিবন্ধন করিয়া জোড়গাঁকোর ৬নং হারকানাথ ঠাকুরের গলিতে ক্রীতবাসী বাবু গগনেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের নিকট পাঠাইয়া দিবেন। ইহা সর্বসাধারণের নিকট প্রকাশ্য নহে। বহুবাক্যবাদের মধ্যে যাহারা এই কার্যে যোগ দিতে ইচ্ছুক আছেন তাঁহাদের নাম ও ঠিকানা এই সপ্তে পাঠাইলে বাখিত হইবে।]

আমরা স্থির করিয়াছি আমরা কয়েকজন মিলিয়া একটি সমাজ স্থাপন করিব। আমাদের নিজের সম্মিলিত চেষ্টায় যথাসাধ্য আমাদের অভাব মোচন ও কষ্টবাসাদন আমরা নিজে করিব, আমাদের শাসন ভার নিজে গ্রহণ করিব, যে সকল কৰ্ম আমাদের স্বদেশীয়ের দ্বারা সাধ্য তাহার ভ্রম অজ্ঞের সাহায্য লইব না। এই অভিপ্রায়ে আমাদের সমাজের বিধি আমাদের প্রত্যেককে একান্ত বাধ্যভাবে পালন করিতে হইবে। অজ্ঞতা করিলে সমাজবিধি হইবে যৌকর করিব।

সমাজের অধিনায়ক ও তাঁহার সহায়কারী সচিবগণকে তাহাদের সমাজনির্দিষ্ট অধিকার অঙ্গসারে নির্দিষ্টারে যথাযোগ্য সম্মান করিব।

বাঙালীমাত্রেই এ সমাজে যোগ দিতে পারিবেন।

সাধারণতঃ ২১ বৎসর বয়সের নীচে কাহাকেও গ্রহণ করা হইবে না।

এ সভার সভ্যগণের নিম্নলিখিত বিষয়ে সম্মতি থাকা আবশ্যক।

- ১। আমাদের সমাজের ও সাধারণতঃ ভারতবর্ষীয় সমাজের কোনো প্রকার সামাজিক বিধিবাধস্থার ভ্রম আমরা পূর্বমণ্ডলের শরণাপন্ন হইব না।
- ২। ইচ্ছাপূরক আমরা বিলাতি পরিচ্ছদ ও বিলাতি ব্রব্যাদি ব্যবহার করিব না।
- ৩। কৰ্মের অল্পরোধ ব্যতীত বাঙালিকে ইংরেজিতে পত্র লিখিব না।
- ৪। ক্রিয়াকৰ্মে ইংরেজি খানা, ইংরেজি শাখা, ইংরেজি বাস্তব, মন্ত সেবন, এবং আড়ম্বরের উদ্দেশ্যে ইংরেজ নিমন্ত্রণ বন্ধ করিব। যদি বন্ধু বা অন্য বিশেষ কারণে ইংরেজ নিমন্ত্রণ করি তবে তাহাকে বাংলা-রীতিতে খাওয়াইব।
- ৫। যতদিন না আমরা নিজে স্বদেশী বিদ্যালয় স্থাপন করিতে পারি ততদিন যথাসাধ্য স্বদেশীচালিত বিদ্যালয়ে সন্তানদিগকে পড়াইব।
- ৬। সমাজস্থ ব্যক্তিগণের মধ্যে যদি কোনো প্রকার বিরোধ উপস্থিত হয় তবে আপাততে না গিয়া সর্বাগ্রে সমাজ-নির্দিষ্ট বিচারব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করিবার চেষ্টা করিব।
- ৭। স্বদেশী বোঝান হইতে আমাদের ব্যবহার্য ব্রব্য ক্রয় করিব।
- ৮। পরস্পরের মধ্যে মতান্তর ঘটিলেও বাহিরের লোকের নিকট সমাজের বা সামাজিকের নিন্দাজনক কোনো কথা বলিব না।

Opening lines of a comprehensive scheme of socio-political reconstruction of Indian society drafted by Rabindranath in 1904 following his famous address on 'Swadeshi Samaj' The scheme which envisaged the organisation of the forces and resources of the country independent of all associations with the bureaucratic administration and Britishers was privately circulated

IT was Rabindranath who had first preached the duty of eschewing all voluntary associations with official activities, and of applying ourselves to the organisation of our economic, social and educational life, independently of official help and control.

THOUGH the boycott of British goods, as a protest against the partition of Bengal, originated with others, and was adopted by the political leaders of the country, in public meeting assembled, in the Town Hall of Calcutta, it was Rabindranath who first propounded an elaborate scheme for the practical boycott of the administration to the farthest limits that the laws of the land allow us to do.

THE idea of the Rakhi Celebrations, first inaugurated on the 16th of October, 1905, the day when the partition was formally effected, as a standing protest against the official attempt to divide the Bengalee race, originated with Rabindranath.

BIPIN CHANDRA PAL

in his "Indian Nationalism : Its Principles and Personalities"

acknowledging the world's debt to ancient India when he spoke of her as "the source" of Europe's languages and religions, whose people represented "the type of the ancient German in the Jat and the type of the ancient Greek in the Brahmin". Karl Marx promised the "regeneration" of that country whose "gentle natives" were "even in the most inferior classes, plus fins et adroits que les Italiens (subtler and clever than the Italians) who, notwithstanding their langour, have astonished the British officers by their bravery"

II

AS RABINDRANATH was growing into youth there appeared the *Bangadarshana* with Bankim Chandra as its guide and philosopher—Bankim Chandra who, as Bhagrattha, brought, by the strength of his *tapasya* the flood of ideas and sentiments that made for strength and beauty in our national character. This was the imagery that Rabindranath himself used in paying a tribute of tears to the memory of this "morning star" of renaissance in Bengal. The estimate has been confirmed by history. The miracle of awakening during the seventies of the last century was not, however, confined to Bengal alone. In Western India, at Poona, almost at the same time was started the *Nibandha-Mala* which did in Maharashtra what the *Bangadarshana* did in Bengal. Vishnu Sastri Chiplunkar was the power behind this institution—he who has been called "the father of Nationalism in Maharashtra" by Narasimha Chintamon Kelkar in his biography of Balwant Gangadhar Tilak. It is a curious phenomenon that "literary men" in India should have been the first to challenge the ruling ideas of politics in India. These ideas may be summarised as follows. Britain had rescued India from anarchy, from social atrophy, from intellectual torpidity. India must accept Britain's tutelage if she hoped to have a fuller and more self-respectful life; her people must put themselves into the British Kindergarten out of which they would emerge better men, capable of ensuring ordered and civilized existence. Against this belief the "literary men" raised the first standard of revolt, they appeared to be more sensitive to the insult of this arrangement than the politicians.

The story related thus far has brought us to the years when Rabindranath was stirring his wings for the flight. The Jorasanko house of the Tagores has been one of the nurseries of the new sense of self-respect, of the new spirit of self-assertion in the coun-

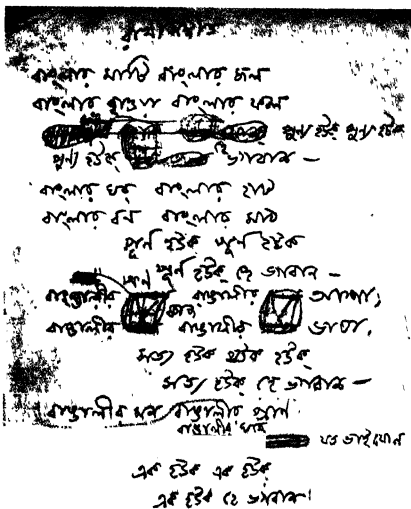
try. Rabindranath's elder brothers—Dwijendra Nath, Jyotirindra Nath—and Raj Narain Basu were the priests of this new dispensation. The sensitive and retiring youth that Rabindranath was at that time quickened under their influence into the organ voice of a "new departure" in the political thought and conduct of the country. The first intimations of this change were given in two papers read at meetings of the *elite* of Calcutta. The first paper was read in the month of *Chaitra* of the Bengalee year 1290, that is fifty-seven years back when Rabindranath was 23 years old, the second was read a year and a half later. Extracts from these will reveal the mind that Rabindranath brought to the consideration of the political problems of the country.

"We may appear to be gaining as Government granted us one privilege after another. But who cared to enquire after the injury that unknown to us occurred? Do we not as often cry out—"victory to the profession of begging!"

Carry on agitation by all means but direct it to your own people; . . . educate yourselves, educate your people."

"If you desire to instil into your fellow-countrymen the virtues of citizenship, do one thing. Save one Indian at least from the oppression of the Englishmen, let him feel and understand that the Englishman and Fate are not convertible terms, let him for once feel the joy of victory, let him for once see just revenge overtake the oppressor. Then will national self-respect sprout in the heart of the commonalty of the land."

"The peasant stood or sat gaping as the lecturer from the town was speaking passionate words of patriotism and singing national songs, then did he yawn, close his eyes, and drowse. When he returned home he told his wife that the Babu from Calcutta had sung very well the songs of Satya Peer. But when this insensitive man caught in the immensity of danger found while dreaming that his fellow-countrymen were coming forward with hands outstretched to save him, then will he learn the lesson of patriotism that will last as long as he lived. When our children found that on all sides our countrymen were eager to help one another, then it would not be necessary for them to learn the meaning of patriotism from an English book. . . . They would learn from work not from words."



A facsimile of the great 'Rakhi-song' composed by the Poet initiating the 'Rakhi-bandhan' ceremony to symbolise the unity of Bengal on October 16, 1905,—the day the "partition" of the province was given effect to by Lord Curzon

III

SINCE THEN, from 1883 to the present day, in everything that he has written, on every occasion that he has spoken, Rabindranath has made self-reverence, self-knowledge and self-control the corner-stones of our national regeneration. On every string of the mind—love, passion, pathos, railery, humour, anger—did this master craftsman strike to break the charm that held us captive to the belief that national salvation could be secured by the lustiness of tongue and voice. It was an uphill task, till 1900 it appeared to be a cry in the wilderness when Providence sent us a genius for Governor-General and Viceroy of India. Then were heard rumblings of a change in the spirit of our dreams which showed that the seeds sown by the "literary men" had fallen on soil that had not been as sterile as our politicians had believed. Only those who had the bliss of responding to the message of these "literary men" could say how life had meant different to them because these men had lived and worked. Because we had looked into the eyes of Surendra Nath Banerjee, of Balwant Gangadhar Tilak, of Rabindranath

Tagore, of Bipin Chandra Pal, of Upadhyaya Brahmabandhav, and of Aurobinda Ghosh, had come within the range of their spacious eyes, we have been different from our immediate ancestors. This became possible because "literary men" in Bengal, in India, had prepared the ground for them, had sown the seed that appeared of a sudden to have sprouted into a generous harvest of noble thoughts, of far-reaching aspirations, of high audacity, and of reckless sacrifice. Of the "literary men" who had worked for this miracle of awakening Rabindranath had the rare good fortune to have played an active part in affairs during the opening years of this century. From a singer of songs he shaped himself into the prophet who could utter flaming words to the assembly—words that burnt out all that was mean and weak within us. It is this prophetic fervour that we saw burning as we sat, one among many students, in the hall of the Metropolitan Institution (now the Vidyasagar College) where he invoked before our eyes the glory and the grandeur and the tenderness of the Mother, risen from the heart of Bengal, to whose service he had dedicated himself in 1888. In the *Parityakta*

(Forsaken) the poet has spoken of this initiation

"As I stood under the canopy of
heaven,
disappeared all fear and shame,
I could feel that in this world
even for me there was some work
So I stood in my country one morn
and prayed with folded hands
Accept, O Mother, all my life
that I consecrate to Thee!"

IV

WE FELT this fervour enveloping us in the Minerva Theatre as the Poet drew for us the lineaments of the *Swadeshi Samaj* that had maintained the autonomy of Indian social life under any number of foreign rulers. We were uplifted by this fervour at the Town Hall of Calcutta where he read his paper *Abastha O Byabastha* at a meeting organised by the conductors of the *New India* (Bipin Chandra Pal's Weekly). Out of this emotionalism and idealism in Bengal sprang up 'the new Nationalism of India'. The memory of those days abides with many of us giving a new shape to our thoughts and actions a new purpose to life imparting a new beauty to the 'pitiful submissive family-loving, family-clinging' life of the villages of Bengal.

Rabindranath was the singer and prophet of the new nationalism. He was the maker of its sacraments. The

'In Zacharia's "Resurgent India"

idea of the *Rakhi-Bandhan* celebration on the 16th of October, 1905, the day on which the partition of Bengal was sought to be effected, was his. There was stoppage of all work, there was a *randhan* non-cooking, which enlisted our women in the service of the religion of patriotism. This discipline of self-control prepared us for the evening ceremony when we met one another in our thousands and tens of thousands, and tied round one another's wrist the ochre-coloured thread as a symbol of brotherhood that would stand guard over the honour of our people over the interest and honour of the least and poorest amongst us.

As law-giver of the new dispensation he drew up a scheme of self-organisation of the forces and resources of the country independent of all voluntary association with the bureaucratic administration. This *Swadeshi Samaj* of ours had enabled our ancestors to save the graces and accomplishments of our social life from the "repeated floods of new sovereignty which swept over the land." And the renovation of this *Swadeshi Samaj* has been the theme of all that Rabindranath has written and spoken during more than half a century. The material and spiritual poverty that afflicted our country was principally due to the 'absenteeism' of the natural leaders of Indian society lured away from our villages to the towns. To this seat of disease Rabindranath has been one of the first to direct the people's attention. He has also

prescribed the needed medicine, and attempted to organise its distribution. Blinded by a "school-taught obsession" we have not co-operated with this noble work. The consequences of that failure confront us to-day.

AS A HEALER of these distempers the poet has sorrowed with the poor and the lowly, the nation that dwelt in the cottage. He has striven to put into the tongues of the dumb, of the pale, of the ignorant masses amongst us the language of protest and grim purpose. For their relief, for their education in manhood he has laid out at Santiniketan and Sriniketan seed-plots for a healthier, simpler and humaner life self-reliant but unaggressive, rooted in honest labour but disdaining to exploit the labour of others unafraid because knowledge illumined the path and wisdom guided the journey. These seed-plots have become patterns of constructive nationalism in India. It has taken Indian politicians more than a quarter of a century to realise the value of Rabindranath's work to realise that this *Sadhana* they must undertake if they meant to renew their strength and recover their heritage—the heritage of India, described by Will Durant, as

the tolerance and gentleness of a mature mind, the quiet content of the unacquisitive soul, the calm of the understanding spirit, and a unifying love for all living things."

RABINDRANATH AND THE SWADESHI MOVEMENT

RABINDRANATH'S worship of Motherland did not exhaust itself in mere sentimental effusions over her natural beauties or her glorious past; his patriotism had a more vivid and constructive aspect. And this explains why when there surged over Bengal in 1905 the waves of an awakened self-consciousness and nationalism he was found in the very forefront of the national movement inspiring it with the soul-stirring nation of songs, stabilizing the emotion of excitement with his thoughtful discourses, instinct with the spirit of constructive nationalism, elevating the movement out of the rut of social materialism and blind race hatred by the momentum of his Catholic idealism. When the beautiful *Rakhi-bandhan* ceremony was instituted to affirm the unity of Bengal despite of official hats it was Rabindranath who pronounced its *mantra*.

It. Surendranath Banerjee represented the practical side, and Bipin Chandra Pal and Aravinda Ghosh the passionate side. Rabindranath Tagore incarnated the idealistic side of the new Indian nationalism. When in course of a few years out of the fumes of the *Swadeshi* movement emerged the spectre of terrorism, Rabindranath

uttered his solemn voice of warning pointing out that this new phenomenon was then the spirit of Indian culture and would lead the country to a morass from which it would be difficult to emerge unscathed. It was in those stirring days that the masculine prose of Rabindranath's pen burst forth in its splendid virility and almost eclipsed the Poet himself. And I can say with the deepest conviction that the patriotic young man of the present day cannot do better than study the magnificent discourses of Rabindranath of a quarter of a century ago. His *Swadeshi Samaj*, his *Dehbandha*, his *Samajya* his *Path O Pathiya* and other pieces now published in the collections *Raja-Praja*, *Swadeshi Samaj* and *Samukha* if the young man does it he will equip himself far more effectively for political life than by idly imbibing the manes froth that issues out of the daily press to-day.

—SIR P. C. RAY
in *The Golden Book of Tagore*

TAGORE gave Bengal a great ideal to transfer her allegiance to—one that soon struck music out of the chords so long silent in her race-consciousness, and started an upheaval

of her national spirit. How that spirit grew and gathered invincible strength within the span of a decade was demonstrated by the way it reacted to Lord Curzon's unwitting effort to drive the point of his sword into it. How one's memory rushes back to the stupendous Lower Hall gathering, vibrant and quivering with a new hope hungry drinking in Tagore's singing of *Sonar Bangla*, and joining in the chorus with him! How the wonderful songs of freedom flowed from his pen one after another to intensify the new-found patriotism of the Bengali, to nerve him for the struggle in which he would be inevitably involved in seeking and inuring his new freedom! And the speeches that he delivered in quick succession in the same year appeared to be the direct revelation of his seer's madness. Bengal bowed to Tagore. And his soul seemed to be floating in among Bengal's men and women, like his *Sonar Tari*, with beauty in the prow and truth at the helm, and its precious load of golden corn, his gathered and garnered love for the motherland. Not an avenue of her awakened life but reaches back to Tagore."

—B. C. CHATTERJEE
in *'The Golden Book of Tagore'*

CAMEOS

By

VANGUARD

IT was a wet September evening in 1936. We were driving back home after an interview with Tagore, then staying in a suburb of Calcutta. My companion was an Englishman—a young professor of literature, who had just had his first glimpse of Tagore. He was impressed with the Poet's personality. But he had so many things to ask about him. There was still something that he had yet to figure out about Tagore. After a pause, he asked me how the people, the common people, regarded Tagore. I replied: "Well, we consider him as our national poet. But he is a votary of no narrow nationalism: he has condemned in no unmistakable terms the system that is dominating our country, but he has sought refuge in a broad humanism". "Yes, but," he asked once again, "would you call him a People's Poet, a poet who portrays the life, the struggle and the aspirations of the common man—the toiler in the field and the factory?" I do not remember what answer I could mumble out then, but it was not something that fully satisfied either him or me at the time. As I returned home, the question came back over and over again: Is Tagore a People's Poet?

II

TWO years later, the scene shifts. This time my friend is an Indian in London, who at one time was a student at Santiniketan. He had settled in England after a struggling academic career. We were discussing André Gide who had just come back from the Soviet Union and had started a tirade against that country. It was a shock to the progressive circles and was broadcast all over the world by the reactionary press. What a depressing feeling it was to find the great French writer in the camp of the enemies of the U. S. S. R.! Little by little our discussion veered round to the favourite topics as to whether it was possible for the intellectuals to be above the battle and retreat into the Ivory Tower like the Eyeless in Gaza: while the world

was being enveloped in a desperate struggle of power-politics, and culture stifled all around, no body could remain neutral without helping the cause of reaction. Particularly was it true in a dependent country like ours, and, I asked, if our intellectuals were alive to their responsibility. Many were not, but how was Tagore? Was he socially conscious? Did he realise the issue at stake? Profit versus the People—does he really know on which side he should stand? My friend kept quiet for a moment, and then, from under a huge pile of books, he drew out a dusty file of type-written pages. It was an English translation of Tagore's *Letters from Russia*, and he told me the story behind it.

Years back when this youngman was absorbed in his research, there came to him a copy of Tagore's *Letters from Russia*. He started translating it and he did it at a time when he was nearly stranded. But he felt a sense of responsibility towards his *Gurudeva* and was anxious that Europe should know where Tagore stood in this crisis of progress. The impression that the West retained about Tagore with "the lotus and the crescent moon" was out of date. It was time that they should know him again as the realist who had reacted to the sufferings of exploited humanity. With this end in view, he translated the book, and Bertrand Russell willingly wrote a foreword to the proposed English edition. From the Poet himself came glad consent and everything was arranged but, at the eleventh hour, unexpected circumstances came in the way, and the book was never published.

As I listened to his reading of the manuscript till midnight I realised what an unbelievable loss it was that the book never saw the light of day, for it might have given Tagore a new recognition in the West, more impressive and more significant than what he had received on the publication of *Gitanjali*. This time he would have received more coveted laurels than the Nobel Prize, the gratitude of struggling

millions from Spain to China. With what clear understanding he could delineate the ruthless working of Imperialism in his own country and compare it with the tremendous material and moral progress in the Soviet Union. Here was Tagore as something more than a poet and philosopher. Though not one of them, he had felt with his own heart the misery and starvation of the common people, and he had the courage to admit the great social advance made under a system which destroys the propertied class to which he himself belongs. Here was the great humanist who would never hesitate to condemn exploitation to welcome a better order of things.

III

SUMMER 1939. An international students' delegation was visiting a concentration camp of the Spanish refugees in the south of France. It was a small party but comprised many nationalities from the Chinese and the Indian to the Yugoslav and the American. The visit was intended to demonstrate the youth's common front against Fascism and Imperialism, and for the purpose of conveying the greetings of the world students to the youth of Spain as the vanguard of the People's struggle against Fascism. The camp was situated right at the foot of the Pyrenees, near the frontier, and had a population of 18,000,—mostly from the Army of the Ebro, which included men from all walks of life—writers, artists, doctors, workers, peasants, clerks and shopkeepers,—men from all parts of Spain and beyond,—men of the famous International Brigade who came and fought shoulder to shoulder with the Spanish people because they realised that the front of Peace, Freedom and Democracy was indivisible and could be defended against not by rival imperialisms, but by toiling millions out to build a new world.

The French commandant did not allow us to enter the camp which was under military control and was surrounded by barbed wire for miles around. He was polite but would not let us go in, lest the French Government should be exposed by the appalling treatment that had been meted out to the sons of the sister democracy of Spain. Daladier and Bonnet, the Chamberlains of France, who with their gang, had abetted the Fascist attack on Spain, were now, by imprisoning these valiant

fighters, acting as the gaol-warders of Hitler and Mussolini. The alternative that was offered to these brave soldiers of democracy was either work in the labour-gangs in France or a passage back to Spain to face Franco's firing squads.

We were allowed to interview about 20 people called out of the camp. There were Brazilians, Poles and Chinese in the International Brigade. Of the Spaniards, most of them in that particular camp were students from Colleges and Universities. One of them had been working in the University of Madrid on a thesis on literature for his doctorate, before the Fascist rising in 1936. We talked to each other in broken French, and he asked me a number of questions about India. He had heard a lot about Gandhi, Tagore and Nehru. Of these he ruled out the first, for, as he said, "Gandhi wanted to put the hands on the clock back, while we are out to create a new and better world." But Tagore and Nehru, he continued, were different though they might be under the personal spell of Gandhi. He had read the works of Tagore in French, and had listened to portions of Nehru's Autobiography read out by his comrades at the front. He wanted to know what Tagore's attitude was towards Fascism. Fortunately I had then just read the Poet's reply to Noguchi, and I told him about that. He was happy and remarked, "He might not be coming from the ranks of the people, but he is sensitive and he is honest. He is on the side of progress and justice."

And he added after a pause, "You know Fascism can never be effectively fought by imperialist governments that is why to-day we are in prison in the so-called democracy of France. These governments might one day stand up against Hitler and Mussolini when their own interests will be touched, but Fascism will never die so long as Imperialism survives, and it is for the common people to rise and smash up the present system of exploitation. In that struggle the intellectuals will be called upon to make their choice. Many would be frightened and go over to the side of the bosses. But the better type, men like Malraux, Fox, Cornford and Lorca who fought along with the peasants and the workers—and men like Tagore and Rolland, Toller and Sinclair, who have sent their greetings from a distance,—these will all be on our side. Many of them might not take part in the actual fighting, many might abhor the violence that will show itself in the process, but they will at least be honest when, moved by the agonies of suffering humanity

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RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*A snow-capped volcano in undulating plain
Lifts up its proud head · near its foot
Cluster the vine and the soft streams flow
Men come and go and build their homes
And pass their days in homely joys and fears
The mountain keeps them company, sends to them
Its love in flowing streams and gentle rain
And yet the mountain lives alone
In distant splendour · Lightnings flash,
The thunder shoots up tongues of flame—
Tries to reach the snowy heights in vain
The fire of fourscore summers in your heart,
Fourscore winters' wisdom on your crest
Shine in forms of beauty in deathless verse*

Barcelon,

7-5-41

HUMAYUN KABIR

to-day, they will welcome the birth of the new world of peace, freedom and happiness. By themselves they will not be able to build such a world but they will welcome its construction when the toiling man will be enthroned. They are no doubt individualists and their reactions will be entirely emotional. Yet they will be our valuable allies in the struggle. Would you regard Tagore as one of them?" I did not have to hesitate to give him the proud answer. "Yes, we regard him so" and was reminded of the foggy night in London when he had read the translation of the *Letters from Russia* and of the monsoon evening in Calcutta when the Englishman had asked me, "Would you call him a People's Poet?"

IV

THINGS have moved since then and moved rapidly. I do not know what has happened to the young Spanish student. Perhaps he went back to the Spain that is Franco's prison, or fell into the hands of the Gestapo after the betrayal of France, or if he is one of the few

lucky ones, has escaped to some other part of the world, ever ready to carry on the real People's struggle against Fascism. But Tagore has not belied our hopes, he has reacted magnificently to the sufferings of toiling humanity trying to sever the bonds that bind them. Even in this evening of his life, he has shown the alertness of youth in tearing off the mask from the face of Fascism and Imperialism alike. As I read and re-read his New Year's Message, 'CRISIS IN CIVILISATION', there came back to my mind the face of the young comrade from Spain behind the barbed wire in the concentration camp, and I remembered the ringing words of Rolland, written on May Day 1934 on the advent of German Fascism. "The decisive conflict has begun. It is no longer permissible to keep aloof. Appeal to life against death, against that which kills, against these ravages of humanity: the forces of money, drunk with gold, the Imperialisms drunk with power, the dictatorships of the great companies, and the various forms of Fascism, drunk with blood. Working man, here are our hands. We are yours. Let us unite. Let us close up our ranks. Humanity is in danger!"

ALL-EMBRACING COSMOPOLITANISM

TWO sons of Mother India, more than any others, have raised her dignity and status in the eyes of the world, Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi. The British connexion may have brought railways and telegraphs to this ancient land but the impression left abroad was that India was a land of cobras and semi-savages and hot as Turkish Bath. Those who affected a higher pose inquired about falcons and talked of the mango tree or rope tricks. Jagadish Bose, Prafulla Ray and Raman attained fame in the limited sphere of science but Tagore the Poet and Gandhi the Mystic carried India forward at one bound and placed her along with others in the vanguard of world culture and civilisation.

MANY better qualified than myself will speak of the contribution Tagore has made to art and literature. There is, however, an aspect of his philosophy of life which has not re-

ceived that attention from his countrymen which it deserves in the present days of our miserv and political degradation. A child of the East and the West, Tagore is, in my view, pre-eminently indebted to Kabir for his special and peculiar ideology. Generations yet unborn will go on discussing whether Kabir was a Hindu or a Muslim or an offspring and an outcome of the contact of Islam with Hinduism. However his poetic love may have been influenced by the Hindu Bard of Maghar Kabir made of Tagore the man who set the whole of Asia thinking. Was it worth-while worshipping the demon of Nationalism as created by the warring peoples of the West, whose loyalty to the teachings of the Asian Prince of Peace had become an exploded myth? Brotherhood of man and an altogether humanitarian international outlook, the pillars on which the structure of Muslim Society has been reared, must have been inspired into Tagore vicariously by Kabir, or directly by his own study of the

Bullal of Shiraz and other masters of Iranian poetry.

I HAD the privilege of visiting the Poet, with Mr. Sarojini Naidu, in 1917, when I visited Calcutta as a Congress delegate. During the course of the conversation the Poet told us that no man, and especially an Oriental, could write real poetry unless and until he had read Hafiz and that he had himself begun to learn Persian. It is this wider vision and all-embracing cosmopolitanism that has made Tagore transcend the boundaries which circumscribe the mental outlook of the ordinary man. Tagore is an Indian to the core of his heart and yet he is no less International. He will live through his works for generations to come. China has benefited out of his teachings. Let us emulate him while he lives and let us immortalise him by our efforts to realise his ideals.

—Abdur Rahman Siddiqi

RABINDRANATH AND INDIAN NATIONALISM

WHAT Goethe was to Germany, what Wordsworth was to England, what Walt Whitman was to America, that Tagore is to India.

The whole of India has united in the grateful appreciation of the supreme contribution which Rabindranath Tagore has made in every sphere of India's cultural existence for more than half-a-century. In particular, Bengal has expressed her eternal gratitude for the fold services which Tagore has rendered to the Indian national cause. Tagore is admired not only in his literary accomplishments but also in the hearts of his people. He has captured the imagination of young Bengal and of young India, not simply because he is the Enlightened One, but because he has been the finest Interpreter of the spirit of India and the spirit of Asia to the Western World.

He is one of the greatest makers of New Asia and has been instrumental in transforming the Indian cultural movement from an ideal into a Force. His poems and songs were chanted by the champions and supporters of the new Renaissance movement which

synchronised with the Swadeshi movement in the beginning of twentieth century. They still furnish the joy and the inspiration to every worker in the national cause. Generations yet unborn will point their fingers to this Venerable Seer as the Rishi of modern India, who had shown the way to the Final Beatitude to every Indian who suffered and toiled for the emancipation of our Motherland.

Tagore preached a new Ideal—possibly the grandest conception of Truth and Beauty—when the greatest minds of the East and the West met a decade back at the residence of Professor Einstein. Tagore told the great Scientist that Truth is realised through Man. Einstein attempted to argue that if there would be no human being, the Apollo Belvedere would still be beautiful. Tagore in his inimitable poetical prose impressed upon the great Scientist his twin doctrines of Truth and Beauty in the following words:—

“Beauty is in the ideal of perfect harmony which is in the Universal Being, truth the perfect comprehension of the Universal Mind.”

IN the present distracted world, when the intoxicated Imperialist nations are indulging in a blood-bath, Tagore has preached a new Religion—the Religion of Man—which was his thesis for a series of fine discourses he addressed to the Western World. What is Tagore's Religion? It transcends the limitations of Country and Community, the frontiers of States and Nations, the artificial boundaries created and imposed by the modern machine Civilization. Tagore has preached and is preaching his Religion not merely as an Idealist, as a recluse, but as a practical Philosopher who has practised in his own life and in his own actions the principles he has preached. Tagore has expounded his own Religion in the following words:—

My religion is in the recognition of the Super-personal Man, the Universal human spirit, in my own individual being.”

It is the great glory of Tagore that like a true Prophet he warned his countrymen not to mistake the convulsions of hysteria as the symptoms of power. He has preached the grand old Indian doctrine that one man should

not covet another man's property or wealth. He had exposed the true nature of the exploitation which is carried on in the name of India's salvation. He has pointed out to the British people that their policy would bring ruin not merely to India but also to Britain. In one of his stirring addresses Tagore has exclaimed—"By rolling India of her strength her masters have invited disaster on themselves."

It has been the pride of Bengal that our greatest Poet had been the foremost Musician and Singer as also a

constructive National Worker. The musical words of Tagore not merely gave us verses of enchanting beauty but also sounded a clarion call to the weak in spirit who suffered from a sense of defeatism. In his great song 'Victory' Tagore invoked the Dispenser of India's Destiny in the following words —

*Thou Dispenser of India's destiny,
Victory Victory, Victory to thee*

*Eternal Charioteer thou drivest
man's history*

*Along the road rugged with
rises and falls of Nations*

Amidst all tribulations and terror

*Thy trumpet sounds to hearten
those that despair and droop
And guide all people in their
paths of peril and pilgrimage,
Thou Dispenser of India's destiny,
Victory Victory, Victory
to thee "*

Tagore's trumpet was sounded, and that will for ever hearten those in India who despair and droop. The Victory of Tagore will be the Victory of India and would mean the triumph of Spirit in the truest sense of the term.

—N C Chatterjee

THE QUINTESSENCE OF OUR CULTURE

THE earliest day of my life that I can remember there came floating a song into my ears which penetrated deep into my soul and has held me in thrall ever since. It was a strange simple song—a song that the young Bengali cowherd breathed through his frail bamboo flageolet—a song that had the fragrance of Bengal's paddy fields and rain swept mango groves, the coolness of her moon-blanchéd nights and the soft melody of her noble Ganges! Yes that phantom-song was Rabindranath Tagore's! To millions of Bengali hearts that song came floating like wise. Its joys and lamentations its philosophy and wisdom its passion and pathos its message and call had the same abiding influence on the lives of every one of us in every walk of life. We cannot weep without humming a note of it, we cannot love without chanting a line from it, we cannot pride without giving a thought to it, we feel no inspiration without its vibrations in our bosom!

RABINDRANATH is a seer and a sage, born to rule the hearts of men and lead them from darkness to light from ignorance to knowledge. In a world of ever-changing tastes ever tumbling values and ever-fleeting forms the intellectual truth and moral beauty of Tagore's poetry remain bright and un tarnished—the very quintessence of our culture and civilisation! His message has universal appeal, his fame is international. And yet there is an undercurrent of all that is typically Bengali in his themes. What my youth and the youth of the rest of my countrymen owe to Tagore's poetry is impossible to describe. Think what the skies would look without the stars or the garden without the flowers! It would all have been bleak and arid without this comforting oasis. It is in the Poet's wonderful writings that we come into touch with the more permanent values of life, such as Death, Love and all that which whether of Nature or of Art, breathes the sublime essence of Truth and Human-

ity. The supreme and infallible test of our love and devotion for Tagore lies in the fact that we delight to imitate his handwriting, we freely steal from his works, we try eagerly to borrow his manner and speech—in fact, we have an uncontrollable urge to feel, suffer, laugh, weep, love and hate with this unique and super-sensitive soul, for most assuredly do these form the synthesis of Bengali life and culture.

It is the eighty-first birthday of such a beloved personality that we are celebrating today. Millions of prayers will mingle with millions of joyous tear-drops at the thought that he is still among us that we live in the age of Rabindranath Tagore and that we belong to his race!

Rabindranath shall not die for the monument of his glory is
more lasting far
Than bronze and loftier than
the royal site
Of pyramids.

—B N Ray Chowdhury

আজি হতে শত বর্ষ পরে
এখন করিছে গান সে কোন্ মৃত্যু কবি
ভোমাদের ঘরে।
আজিকার বসন্তের আমল অতিবাহন
পাঠায়ে দিলাম তাঁর করে।

আমার বসন্তখান তোমার বসন্ত ঘিরে
ধ্বনিত হউক অগভরে
হৃদয়স্পন্দনে ডব, অনরঙজনে নব,
পল্লব সর্জরে,
আজি হতে শত বর্ষ পরে।

—বুবীন্দ্রনাথ



Where the mind is without fear
And the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up
into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms
towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason
has not lost its way
into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by thee
into ever widening thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father,
let my country awake.

Rabindranath Tagore



"Uttarayan"
Santiniketan, Bengal

November 14, 1934.

It was a sceptical world that ten years ago first welcomed the advent of the "Calcutta Municipal Gazette" with more curiosity than enthusiasm. People were not wanting who even looked upon it as nothing more than a clever piece of political propaganda by a popular leader. But time has amply vindicated Chittaranjan's great idea and his practical wisdom in entrusting Sriji Amal Home with complete control of the new enterprise. For, by common consent, the "Gazette" is today the most practical instrument in training of enlightened citizenship in India. It is indeed a remarkable achievement for the Editor, and all praise to him and his band of faithful - - colleagues. May they lead it on to greater glory!

Chindurath Tagor

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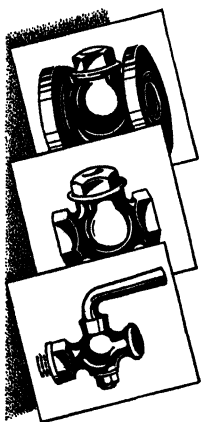
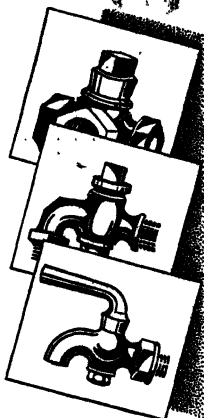
V. R. SONALKAR

In MEMORIAM

*We offer to
the Great Unknown
our
sincerest prayer
so that*

*we may maintain
for
the Nation
the immortal legacy
of*

Rabindranath



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